

/6 cont./

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Our task, of editing, in comparison with that of Koch G., was greatly facilitated. There fell to us the intellectual, patriotic, and religious pleasure of four excursions through the vast and laborious field of the Apostolado Salesiano no Amazonas /Salesian Apostolate in Amazonas/ and of admiring the work of patriotism and evangelical charity that the Filhos de Dom Bosco are achieving there. And benefiting ourselves by means of their company, their knowledge of the native idioms (3),

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3. Besides having already found numerous Indians with whom we could communicate perfectly in the language of our native country, because they had learned Portuguese in the schools of the Missions.

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the prestige that they enjoy, not only among the natives who profit from their material and moral assistance, but even among the others who only know them by repute, we start collecting the precious data of their observations and experience. The ethnographic material contained in these pages could be collected in a relatively short period, although triple that of Grönberg. Nevertheless they describe an existence in the closest possible contact with the forest dwellers: living in their maloca, attending their festivities, listening to them during their long chats among themselves, and entertaining themselves in amiable conversation with them, participating in their joys and their sorrows, observing them in their work, admiring their abilities, using their services, curing their illnesses, probing their spirit, illustrating their intelligence in long years of education, illuminating their soul with religious truths, now and then seeing those minds unexpectedly open in flashes that reveal, through a charming ingenuousness, an internal world never dreamed of. One understands an environment by living in it; and the environment can explain to us a mentality.

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It should not seem exaggerated to speak of an existence of intimate contact with the natives. Because not only our /7/ personal observations are recorded here. We tried to know and to listen to all the Salesian Missionaries who work along the rivers Negro, Uaupés, Tiquié, Papurí, Içana, and Caburí; as well as the Montfort Missionaries who attended to the natives of the region bordering Colombia, since some of the tribes in the study have members living in the zone that today is part of Colombian territory. And, through the mercy of God, we had the happy opportunity to talk with Missionaries who have been living with the children of the forests and for them since 1916.

Therefore, this work, in the strict sense, is a contribution by the Salesian Missionaries to ethnographic studies that, if they are of interest in a general way to the students of the whole world, also speak to us, Brazilians, of political and patriotic interests.

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These pages are a documentary on how the life of the forest people of the Uaupés or Catarí runs its course in the middle of the twentieth century. By dint of an unyieldingly traditionalist mentality which characterizes these human groups, we may also think that they are, on general lines, a description of how they have lived for centuries, or perhaps even of how these tribes have lived since they acclimated themselves in their present habitat. Scarce data from the first explorers and information from the old natives justify this opinion.

Even though we enjoyed privileged conditions which other ethnologists have not had, or at least will not be able to have, the intractable depths of the native psyche takes from us the illusion of having unveiled their soul. We are also convinced that we do not yet know customs and practices of interest from the ethnological point of view, and the true meaning of many others escapes us. The primitive fantasy, all the more active the freer it is from the curb of reason and the inhibiting control of positive experience in that mysterious and suggestive environment of the millenary forest, will have built a legendary world with fascinating beauties for their souls, as if they were the

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/footnote 9 cont./ traveling in his canoe and at six o'clock in the morning informed the Missionaries of the visit of the Bishop, who is festively received at the Mission two hours later. Humorously one says that in these latitudes there is not yet wireless telegraph, but the communication system of radio-cipó is well developed.

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If one opens a suitcase, a book, a notebook, the Indian's eye does not leave these objects. And many times he wants to have a more practical and complete knowledge, approaching them, touching them, and /145/ observing them in all their aspects. And not rarely subjecting them to observation by all the senses: he touches, smells, bites. The civilized man realizes that he is being furtively touched on his clothes, or even on the hand, by the children and even by the women. We were not able to verify whether in this gesture some magic concept might also enter.

When he hears Portuguese being spoken, if he does not understand it, he likes to repeat the sounds that he heard, pronouncing them several times, as if to engrave them in his memory.

7) Distrust.

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Conversely, he does not like to be observed. If he perceives that he is, he withdraws. He answers the civilized laconically, going away as soon as possible, in order to avoid a new question; or he will leave without answering. He spends entire hours of travel in silence in a canoe when he travels alone with some civilized man, or even when he travels with others from the tribe, but in the presence of a "white." It is the mistrust (10)

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10. We were lucky in getting Indians of both sexes, from diverse tribes and in different localities, to unbosom themselves confidentially

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/footnote 10 cont./ and reveal to us many more intimate and secret things. Besides the frequent presents, although small (many times only some candies and cigarettes, things greatly appreciated by all), and the patience and kindness of the treatment, it helped us to show that we already knew some of the more secret things, especially pertaining to the subject of our questions. Perhaps the vanity in showing that he knew more and better than the previous informers would open the Indian's mouth. One must insist many, many times that they speak frankly, without embarrassment, that not only would they not lose our esteem, but the civilized person likes frank people better. They could talk because we would not reveal their name to anyone.

Among the confidences that we obtained in this way (and in our notes we have recorded the person, place, and date), confirming their preconceived opinion against all the civilized, even though one may be the most abnegative Missionary, we remember here the following four: 1st. -- they do not like the civilized; 2nd. -- they believe themselves more ingenious than the civilized; they consider them just silly; 3rd. -- they like to see the civilized irritated, -even pretending not to understand what he wants; 4th. -- it is a good thing to hurt the civilized.

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It would be easy to compile several episodes that confirm these statements. But these confidences, collected from the very lips of the natives, dispense with any more words and are more valuable than any episode. The idea of adding this Note to the chapter on the Psychology of the Indian came to us on August 27, 1957, in Carará-poco on the lower Içana, upon hearing that, for the second time, a young Siusf-tapuya woman (with three children, already

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/Footnote 11 cont./ Koch Grünberg tells (Zwei Jahre, 209) that, upon his arrival in the maloca of the Bará, on the Macucú-igarapé, three young women were put in a safe place in a second maloca. We have verified similar events in various circumstances, especially among the Karapanã of the headwaters of the river Aua.

In part also because he feels inferior to the white. A more accurate analysis reveals in him an inferiority complex before the civilized. Only after a long period of living together, especially when one speaks his language, does he sometimes become more open. It is a sign of some trust and friendliness then when he approaches the white and talks to him, resting his hand on one's shoulder. The woman, like the man, comes to wait on the visitor, offering him her hand, according to the present practice; but she soon withdraws. As signs of happiness because of the desired visit by a civilized person, the women -- accompanied by a longer and higher intonation of some syllables of the words of greeting, rub both hands from the shoulder to below the chest of the visitors while they are talking to them.

Due to a mixture of mistrust and shyness, they talk among themselves in a low voice in front of the white, in order that the latter not hear the conversation, if, by chance, he knows the native language. Perhaps for this same reason it is difficult for them to teach their own language (12).

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12. "How is such-and-such a word pronounced?" we would ask the Indian. He, however, does not answer. -- "Is it this way?" we venture. -- "Yes, it is like that," he will say immediately. -- "Or is it this other way?" -- "Yes, it is like that," he will repeat again. In other cases he answers -- "I don't know, I am Taryana, ask the

/146 cont./

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/footnote 12 cont./ Tukano." The Tukano will also excuse himself: "I don't know."
"But you are Tukano." -- "But those from such-and-such a place pronounce it better than I do."

/147/ He is, as a rule, reserved; he does not like to divulge his illnesses, nor his legends and customs. On this point the men are even more reserved than the women, from whom one can obtain information with less difficulty, with the promise of presents.

8) Volubility and inconstancy.

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If we except the prescriptions of the tribal laws, to which, it seems, he finds himself perfectly and passively adapted, as for the rest the Indian enjoys great autonomy. From childhood, especially for those of the male sex, he can follow his fancy. Great tenacity of will then is not to be expected in the native. One can not count on him for a job always the same, for example, to make daily meteorological observations or the connection of an electrical generator. They are very voluble, both the men and the women. They do not adapt to doing the same job indefinitely, although what they themselves choose is more acceptable to them. One can not, then, strictly speak of a profession of carpenter, tailor, sawyer, etc. in referring to some Indian. He might have some knowledge or practice concerning such a trade. But, when under the stimulus of an interest in acquiring some object he is disposed to work, not only is it a matter of indifference to him if he sits down at a sewing machine, serves as a sailor or oarsman, or does any other service, but he himself will ask to leave a job and go to another, quite different one.

/150 cont./

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He does nothing for the white without /151/ pay, and ordinarily he wants it in advance. The truth is that, as a rule, he does not deny his debts to the civilized; many times, however, he maintains that he has done more work and reduces his debts, in spite of the fact that the contrary appears in the entries made with precision and conscientiousness. He frequently lets the time go by, and sometimes he moves away or dies; and that is the end of that. The parents, brothers, children, or other relatives of someone who passed away, let us say in the mission hospital will present themselves at once as legitimate heirs to the shotgun, hammock, suitcase, or other objects belonging to the dead person. No one, however, becomes responsible for the debts of the deceased.

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In order to have them at his service, at the time of the seringá or the Brazil nut, the civilized must pay them in advance. It not infrequently happens that at the time of the work (fâbrico, as is said in Amazonas) the Indian hides; or runs away after working for a time.

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He does not give gifts to the civilized, even though he has received many from him. He sells to him (17).

17. Episodes going so far as to be comic are told. A father, with the family, came to visit his son, who was a student at the Mission in Taracua, and brought with him dried fish and beijú /manioc bread/. And, squatting in a corner, they ate, as on a family picnic. Before leaving, however, he came to charge the Missionary the price of the fish and the beijú.

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At the time of our first excursion to the Içana, in 1953, accompanied by Pe. José Schneider, the latter took with him, among his helpers, a tuxaua of the Mapatse-dákenel (Yuruparf-tapúia) tribe. Like the others, he

/151 cont./

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/footnote 17 cont./ received, besides food and donations, daily service pay. When we arrived in Tunuf, he showed a small basket and beijú, saying that it was a gift that the Baniva from there had given him, but he asked the Pe. for salt, tobacco, and kerosene, "in order to give as thanks."

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If he notices in the latter an interest in some native object, he demands a large payment (18).

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18. For example, the Kubewana came to ask us for a shotgun for a sarabatana /blow-gun/ or a simple acangatara /feather head-ornament/.

When he offers something (beijú, fruits, dried fish), he immediately asks for an object of greater value.

They appear greedy in dealing with other Indians, and even with those of their own tribe. It is not rare that an individual, with his work or products, will acquire salt or tobacco in abundance in the Missionary center and later go to sell it to his fellow tribesmen with great usury. We have seen him acquire pots, mirrors, etc. in the Mission and with these small objects go to trade with those of the more distant malocas, receiving in exchange graters and canoes (19).

19. /This footnote is on p. 152 in the original source./ On our excursion to the Aiarí in May of 1957, one of our oarsmen, from the Siusí tribe, Ernesto by name, from the povoado of S. Ana (lower Içana), had acquired at the Mission in Assunção a shotgun valued at 1,200 cruzeiros. He took it with him, in order to exchange it for a sewing machine,

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They take objects from their own companions. Thefts will be rarer, because life more or less in common restrains or eliminates the impulses toward certain thefts. The attacks on the clearing or the cacuri /fish trap/ of others are frequent. They show shame when they are surprised. If he is not, he denies the theft. Or, confronted with the evidence, he will say: "I took, I did not steal." While the injured one says: -- "He robbed me." One notes a preponderant tendency, almost enslaving, to steal edibles. He ordinarily reveals in the thefts amazing /154/ cunning. Especially in the thefts from the other Indians he abstains from taking anything that might easily identify him. He always takes timely precautions, in the act of stealing as well as afterwards, to hide the corpus delicti; for example, the little girls steal needles and hide them in the hard layer of the soles of their feet.

He rebels when he is forced to make restitution; especially if he must do so to the civilized. He will do it more readily for the tuxaua, who orders him to make restitution whenever he wants to stay friendly with the white. In a different way, especially if he likes the thief, he will say haughtily: -- "There is no thief in the maloca" (22).

22. If they perform these very rare acts of restoration, it can be affirmed that, as a rule, they do not restore the thing stolen, nor do they give proper indemnification. From the moral point of view, it seems legitimate to conclude that they do not have any intention of making restitution or of abstaining from stealing.

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16) Lying -- Not keeping one's word -- Simulation.

The love of the truth that has been noted among some primitives is not the strong point of these Indians of ours. He often answers, falsely, the inquires asked of him: "I do not know," "I did not see." Vice versa, they give information about what they do not know. And the other Indians present do not correct

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• 123 the inaccurate information. For example, they do not like to
577 sell their dance ornaments and regularly affirm that they do not have them. If one asks whether there is anybody sick in the povoado, he will invariably answer no, although in reality there is. One cannot even think, in these and other cases, that there was a mental reservation. Would there be, in the case of the sick ones, some reason of a magic nature? We were not able to find out, in spite of many inquiries in different circumstances and places. They pass to a second and third party the thing stolen, in order to hide it. They never denounce the others, except to defend themselves. Not infrequently we caught them in contradictions (23).

23. In April of 1954 a young woman from Pari-cachoeira described to us her puberty initiation rite with all clarity and indication of details. In June of that same year, speaking casually about the subject, she started to deny that there was Komū (cf. VIII-1, b (7)) or "blower" in her povoado and that she had gone through the initiation. -- Have you forgotten that you already told everything? Don't be bashful ... we told her. Then she smiled, confirmed and completed the description made in April.

If we make this evident to them, they are silent. Silence is a defense and weapon that they frequently use against the civilized and his arguments. They are "born liars" was the expression used by two persons who for several /155/ years lived with these Indians. Not infrequently he maintains his lie even before the most evident proofs.

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Thus its effect is also a superexcitation of the imagination. Nevertheless he sometimes falls to the ground, unconscious. "With the fourth cuia," says the old Indian Antônio to Koch G. (Zwei Jahre, 201), "people fall violently and then have the most beautiful visions" (59).

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59. From our personal experience we can say that we have drunk kaxpí prepared by Makú, Wanãna and Taryana natives. At the great feast of the Wanãna of Carurú-cachoeira (Uaupés), which was discussed above, kaxpí of the Makú, Wanãna, and Taryana tribes was served. That of the Makú tribe was prepared by one of the Makú who served as slaves to the Wanãna of the locality. That of the Taryana was made by the old Taryana Calisto from Lauareté, who brought with him from that locality, for this occasion, a bunch of thick cipo (one inch in diameter and 1.5 meters in length approximately). The kaxpí was distributed personally by the local tuxaua, Mandú by name, who simultaneously took two small cuias, one for each person. The Komú, who "had blown" the drink before the cuias were filled, stirred the liquid, using a piece of thick cipo, with four intumescences, and which is one of the ingredients of the drink. It is taken without difficulty, since it has a bearable bitter taste. Nevertheless, several Indians made faces and some of them spit out the rest. Following that, three men, each /this footnote is continued on the next page in the original source/ with two large-cuias of caxirí, came in a line, zigzagging and making a noise with the mouth like the buzzing of an insect, and distributed the caxirí to those who had drunk kaxpí, in order to take away the unpleasant taste. Some Indians declared to us that they had seen luminous globes or flames. We did not perceive

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/230 cont./

/footnote 59 cont./ anything; we experienced, then, only a slight excitation in the muscles of the legs and, at night, strong occipital pain in the head. We believe, however, that such sensations had nothing to do with the drink and were only the effects of tiredness, of the sun and the heat of the day. We later observed to the Taryana Indians who had accompanied us to the feast that the kaxpf was weak and we had felt nothing. They explained to us that one of the ingredients was missing, a cipo that was planted by an old man who had already died and they had not found such cipo upon undertaking the trip. They promised us to prepare later, with all the technique, a quite strong kaxpf. Actually they did it days later and offered it to us. With fear of a violent reaction caused by the drink, we did not want to take it in public, but in private, and not only a small cuia, but we drank quite a good cuia in three stages. Although, like Koch G., we had before our eyes a white paper on which we wrote down our notes, we did not get to perceive any luminous sensation or any other external feeling. Only the unpleasant taste made us indisposed, although without vomiting, forcing us to diet that day, and to use bitter drops and other stomach potions later. We are of the opinion that, for this reason, the effects indicated in the Indians must be explained by the easy excitability of their imaginations.

/255 cont. /

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/footnote 6 cont. / the Witoto of Pirá-paraná (Colombia) the language of the Trocanos, made in pairs, that is, man and wife, according to the picturesque native expression, was quite well developed.

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[832]

With some musical instruments they manage to emit sounds that are similar to words. For example, with the instrument called Ñamã dôxpoá (deer head, cf. VII, 3 c (3) /see VII, 3 c (10)/), we seemed to hear the syllables -- "Pêru wáatya" (bring caxiri) ... pêru... pêru... pêru" (quickly, quickly, quickly).

The young men direct amorous invitations to the young women with the sounds of some fifes. We were given on the Uaupés (and for this reason we recorded it with the pronunciation of this river) the following invitation, which they express on the fife -- "Yôô-mêna váya" (go with me), -- "Yôô-mêna vágo-tá" (you just go with me), "añunô nřgosa" (be good), "añunô nřhosa" (it is going to be good). To send out such invitations with the sound of the flutes is what is called in Tukano puxtf-weresã (literally: to complain by playing the flute).

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They likewise know how to emit certain characteristic and various cries, sometimes similar to the voice of animals and chirping of the birds, and they orient themselves, call one another, give information, etc., with these signals (7).

7. On a trip to the great maloca of the Tuyuka, on the upper Tíquié, frontier with Colombia, the machete that one of our traveling companions had loaned to the Indians disappeared. At the time for the canoe to leave, he asked about the machete and no one could give any information as to where it might be. Impatient, he complained that it was a theft, and this was wicked. After the /this footnote is continued on the next page in the original source/ canoe

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/255 cont./

/footnote 7 cont./ had gone about four hundred meters, a characteristic cry, which seemed to us more like the chirping of some bird, was heard. The Tucano who came along with us as oarsmen interpreted at once: "It is the tuxaua who is calling in order to return the machete." Truly the tuxaua was waiting for us with the machete, which was returned to its legitimate owner.

On several occasions, as we navigated the headwaters of the rivers or the Igarapés, Indians who were in the interior of the forest and heard the noise of the oars exchanged whistles with our oarsmen, who afterwards would give us detailed information: who they were, if they were hunting, picking fruits, looking for caraná, or cutting lumber. It is to be noted that we never heard the Indian humming his songs or whistling for mere diversion.

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/256/ 2. Sciences.

a) Geography -- Topography.

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Their geographic notions of the region are not very numerous, but they are accurate. It is difficult to distinguish what they know through individual experience, through tribal tradition, or through the influence of the civilized whom they consult, because, endowed with an excellent memory, they retain the information that they receive, like that which they learn visually.

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Geral, Dabacuri. They are also called Wãx-tfye baxsá, dances of Wãx-tf.

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Poosé, properly speaking, means offering. Such feasts consist essentially of the offering of fish, beijú, or fruits (40)

40. The Holy Scripture says that Caim /Cain/ offered the Divinity the fruits of the earth, whereas Abel (and later the pastoral peoples, as well as the Jews) performed religious ceremonies with the offering of animals.

and of the communion of drink and tobacco, accompanied by religious dances and with the sound of the mysterious instrument, called Míf and sounded at the beginning of the feast.

Ordinarily the native does not know (41)

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41. One has the impression that they do not reveal some things to the young ones, more in contact with the civilized and who speak Portuguese, especially those who have studied in the schools of the Salesian Mission, out of fear that they will tell them to the civilized.

(this is what seems more probable to us), or he does not want to say, the for the feast or the meaning of it. They answer us that they do this because the ancients always did this. More than one, however, assured us that they do this in order that neither the fish nor the fruit would ever be scarce for them.

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The Wanana Tomás Paiva (42),

42. He is an intelligent, well-traveled, and quite bold native. He studied in the Salesian Mission of Iauareté, where he also learned the trade of carpenter and has already worked at various times for the civilized of Colombia and Venezuela.

son and possible successor of the tuxaua of Carurú-cachoeira, river Uaupés, on April 20, 1955, expressed himself in this way

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 506]

/337 cont./

796 Such feasts are held five to six times a year; not at fixed
782 times, but corresponding to the ripening of the fruits, or to the
time of the great fishing trips, depending on whether it is a matter
of the sacrifice of fruits, mandioca, or of fish to the deity. Or
585 also on the occasion of marriage and initiation of the young people.
881 /338/ The following attests to the religious character of
the feast:

*[192] 1st. -- In first place, the very denomination of Wãx-tfye-
baxsã, dance of Wãx-tf. The natives of Ipanurê-cachoeira told
Koch G. that on certain days they heard a deep noise in the
cachoeira, like that of the great sacred instrument, the Mfrf. It is
a sign, then, that the Wãx-tf of the cachoeira wants a feast held
for him.

• [123] 2nd. -- The affirmations (some clearer, others more veiled)
[124] of the natives, although they keep many things hidden, and in gen-
[115] eral the old people, who know more, are the most reserved. Ask-
ing the old Christian Tukano Júlio, tuxáua-bayá of Pari-cachoeira
(that is, local chief and dance master), why they put those orna-
ments on the head, nape, arm, etc., he answered us at once: "The
same as the Padre puts on the biretta and his vestments at the Mass,
so we put on the acangatarã /feather headdress/."

Manifesting to the same tuxaua the desire to attend a Poose
held by him, in order to film it, he answered immediately: "Such
a dance is not for fun." This same tuxaua, after having made some
revelations to us and having sung for us the songs of the Poose,
manifested to a Missionary scruples about having committed a
mistake by doing so.

3rd. -- The seriousness with which they proceed. No dis-
tractions or frivolity, no laughter or conversation (45).

45. During one of these dances, somebody among
the civilized spectators started to laugh. The
tuxaua sent one of his men to warn that he should
not laugh, just as he did not laugh during the
functions of the whites. If he continued to do it,

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/footnote 45 cont./ he would not allow him to attend the dance. Confirmation of this religious character, it seems to us, is also found in the refusal to our request to repeat the ceremony of the offering of the fish (wai poosé) under better conditions, so that we could film it. Nevertheless these Indians repeated the simple dances for us for this same purpose.

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The Tukano Antônio Barreto (December of 1953) assured us that they did not do poosé in front of the whites. Nevertheless, we had the opportunity to attend it and to film it. Koch Grünberg (Zwei Jahre, p. 202): he moreover was able to attend it on the Umarí-igarapé, but many Indians appeared displeased by this, and the tuxáua José did not allow him to take photographs.

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As though they were undertaking a serious ceremony and not a diversion. Nothing will disturb these rites. Singing mysterious words (ancient dialect? or, with more probability, mere corruption) which they do not understand, dancing in a slow cadence and marking the time with stronger beats with the right foot.

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/339/ 4th. -- They attribute to such feasts in addition an efficacious healing action. It can drive away all the sicknesses and even heal large wounds (46).

46. This is what Koch Grünberg was able to verify (Zwei Jahre, 202): "dem Yurupari-Tanze wird eine stark Zauberwirkung zugeschrieben /sic/. Er soll alle Krankheiten vertreiben, und selbst gross Wunden heilen" /a strong magical effect is attributed to the Yurupari dance. It is supposed to drive away all sicknesses, and even

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• [23]

/footnote 47 cont./ the morning. And the one that we attended in Carurú-cachoeira (river Uaupés) on April 24 and 25 of 1955 was also in the morning.

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the visitors send another warning -- "it is time!" They take their musical instruments (japurutús or whistles) and the offering and, amid yells, the procession is organized by way of the road from the landing place to the maloca (or by way of the road by which they came).

The tuxáua goes in front, followed by two musicians with their japurutús (see VII - 3 c (3a) /see 3 c (3c)/) (48)

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48. In July of 1955 the seringalista /owner of a seringal/ Armando Sarmento observed at a feast of the Kubewana of the upper Uaupés that the two who opened the procession held with the right hand the Japurutú, which they were playing, and with the left one the respective lady. The other men came behind them, with only the rhythm stick, ahũ-wõ, in the right hand, beating the rhythm of the steps, and without a lady. He also noticed that inside the maloca, where the procession turned around, there were pieces of beijú and peelings of pupunha scattered on the floor (the poosé was one of pupunha).

and the men who bring the offering; the rest of the men behind. They make a turn around the maloca, then go in and make two turns inside, yelling, those who are entering and those who are already inside, a prolonged eee... (it is what is called oái, to cry out). The men and youths of the maloca are arranged in Indian file, according to their rules of precedence, from the left side of the door to the back.

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Such formalistic greetings last an hour and a half. Afterwards the ritual banquet starts, without any further pragmatics, each eating whatever pleases him: first the men, more or less grouped in the front part of the maloca; afterwards the women and children, in groups at the back of the maloca.

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Once this meal is finished, the ritual fast begins, that is, abstention from any food. It is only permissible to take some of the drink prepared for the feast. They do this, helping themselves copiously, even excessively, to the drink, which, besides, is very nourishing, being as it is, in reality, a thin pap (49).

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49. On a certain occasion, after eleven hours of laborious passage through the forest, we arrived at a maloca of the Bará, located near the headwaters of the stream called maríya (tributary of the Tiquié), when a feast was being given there. One of our traveling companions, of the Bará tribe, who should have been very tired and undernourished, like all of us, since he was carrying the heaviest load, did not accept the food that was prepared for those of our retinue. He preferred to participate in the feast with his "brothers," and contented himself with only beijú caxirí.

2) Preparation for the dances.

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The tuxáua, at a certain moment, tells the chief of the visitors that the banquet is finished and "he may open the box of the decorations" (mahí poári axká-ro).

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/344/ The women of the maloca come to fit the bands (uxtá-seri) to the guests' legs, below the knee, and to execute the body painting. The woman who painted him will be the guest's dance partner. It falls to the man, Pe. Humberto Limpens and the Tukano Antônio Barreto note, to paint the woman, and

/344 cont./
vice versa (50).

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50. We had the opportunity to observe and "to film" the women painting the men. They used for this job, not only their own finger, but also fragments of arumá by way of a brush; sometimes three little sticks of arumá tied together in such a way that from each movement a quite regular triple line resulted. Koch Grünberg himself (Zwei Jahre, 217) let himself be painted on the chest and arms by an Indian woman.

They did not explain to us, nor could we verify, whether they must obey a rule or if they are free to choose the person whom they are to paint. "Yōō wa'rénōkō, the one painted by me," this is how the man is designated by the woman who painted him; and "yōō wa'rēko, the one who painted me," is the expression with which the man calls her.

The ornaments are distributed according to the social importance of the individuals, alternately, one for one of the guests, another for a man of the maloca. If there are not enough of them for everyone, and the maloca also has its decorations, one borrows them in order to be complete. It might happen that some will have to remain with more simple decorations and perhaps even only with paintings, because of the lack of ornaments.

When everyone is ready (and this is always done with great slowness), they sit down on the small seats, and the guests play the flute of onça /jaguar/ bone (Yaf o'a). Some minutes later their tuxáua makes a speech: -- "We have come to entertain those of the maloca with our dance, and we shall dance as long as the caxiri lasts." He then sounds his kistió /sic/ (ankle snappers, cf. VII-3, c (3a)); it is a sign that the dances

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the men and with her own arms holding by the waist the two men whom she is between. The eyes are turned toward the center of the circle, and the points of the lances, yōxse-phīrī, converge toward this point when they carry them.

At a certain point the local tuxáua gives an order indicating that it is the middle of the dance. Two men, among the leaders, go into the middle of the circle, make some turns, and finally come back to the line with the rest.

At a special order the women abandon their places, each one shouting her word. The dance ends with expressive whooping by the men; all those armed with a lance leave, bending as if they were looking for something, and, advancing toward a corner of the maloca, make a thrust with the lance toward an imaginary point about a meter above the ground. They call this "blow-to-the-white, pexká-sā paasé" (54).

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54. The Indians have always appeared very reserved in explaining to us the meaning and purpose of this "blow-to-the-white," although they had revealed its name to us without any embarrassment, perhaps thinking that we would not know how to translate it. On two occasions a native of the Tukano tribe of the lower Uaupés confirmed to us that "They do not like the whites and consider all of them enemies." Another native, also belonging to the Tukano tribe, although from the Papuri, in response to our question as to whether he liked the "white" or the "caboclo" better, asked us the meaning of the word /this footnote is continued on the next page in the original source/ "caboclo." To our answer that caboclos were the children of a civilized man and Indian woman, such as are on the Rio Negro, he answered immediately: --"We

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At the various times that we had the opportunity to attend these feasts, we did not see any initial ceremony. Each one seated in front of his antagonist, at a distance of a meter perhaps, they start to narrate in a singing tone accompanied by broad gestures and alternately with the right and the left arm. They unravel the legends of the origin of the world and of the tribes, as well as the exploits of their ancestors. They speak alternately and sometimes also simultaneously, breaking off only take a breath and perhaps, at a given time, to recall some further episode. The event told by his competitor will sometimes serve to remind him of another episode. So it seems to us.

If, by any chance, they carry to him the cuia of caxiri, he receives it without looking; he will keep it in his hand until he finishes the episode that he is narrating, and then he will swallow it rapidly, returning it empty to the one who brought it, and who remained patiently waiting.

It seems to be a matter of a true challenge. A competition of oratory and also of time, of rapidity of locution, of physical or, better, pulmonary endurance. During all this time they do not concern themselves about the audience, though there may perhaps be an indiscreet white who has come closer to observe better. At a certain point, however, /351/ one of the old men of the maloca intervenes and interrupts one of the narrators (we do not know whether he does it only to one of another tribe or maloca who came for the poosé, as in the case that we had a chance to observe), directing some words to him in a rapid dialogue. They informed us that it is the practice, and it is a thanks for his activity. But soon afterwards the competition proceeds with the same rhythm and intonation.

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The Rite of the Cigar. The principal act of the Legendary Commemorations is the Rite of the Cigar, which takes place around 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning, and which marks, moreover, the official ending of the poosé. Two enormous cigars, each tied to its fork (VI 2, b (5)), starting with the tuxaua and one of the Kōmūā, will pass simultaneously from mouth to mouth,

/397 cont./

535 wore on his head a wide acangatara /head ornament/ with arara
237 feathers; a wig with braids of monkey skin and with two long, red
301 arara feathers and an onça /jaguar/ bone. From the wig, leaning
toward each ear, there was a long, white heron feather. Hanging
over the back the cangatá, a cord with tucano /toucan/ feathers.
Also on the wig, close to the nape, the crest, or rectangular woven
piece with long heron feathers. On the neck three long necklaces
of beads and a necklace of seeds with the stone of command. From
the ears, earrings made out of a burnished half of a gun cartridge.
[302] As painting on the forehead, a red semicircle turned upward and a
large cross from the neck to the waist (132),

- [123] 132. At a dance that we attended in the maloca of
the Tuyuka in the igarapé of the Onça /jaguar/, upper
Tiquié, from the painting of the Kõmũ resulted a
cross on the face with a broad stroke from the fore-
head along the nose and upper lip, and the arms of
the cross curved upward almost in a semicircle.

also in the color red. On the left elbow, a bracer of monkey skin.
In the form of a belt, over the buttocks, a necklace of teeth, to
which he later attached two branches of that magic and intensely
aromatic shrub called bará. In the course of the dance he fitted to
the right ankle a necklace of seeds (Kixtyó).

*[192] Marcelino wore a small, denticulated wreath of fine straw,
with yellow down from the arara; at the nape the crest with white
plumes and a long feather surrounded by a string of colorful plumes.
On the left elbow the armband of monkey skin. Hanging at the
back, braids of monkey skin decorated with arara down.

- *192 b) Execution. A small rehearsal took place in order to verify
534 whether the japurutús /long flutes/ were in tune with each other, as
well as the carigos /Panpipes/. A little caxiri was drunk.

534 The tuxaua executed the yaf-gõ paasé, that is, he made the
535 rhythm stick, called "stick-of-the-onça /jaguar/," decorated with
feathers, vibrate several times on the right muscle of the arm. He
took some steps in rhythm with the pestle-tube of imbauba, and he

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/397 com./

534 took up a position in front of the second post at the left, in the
535 /398/ central nave (133).

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133. Their rectangular maloca, although not of large dimensions, corresponded to a division of five naves: the central high nave, under the ridge, two side spaces, and, along the side walls, the space reserved for the families. It is to be noted, however, that there is no interior partition between family and family.

The men imitated his steps and, on his left, formed an open semi-circle.

*[192]

1st Part: Each one places the left hand on the right shoulder of the companion (Pá-bwasé is the Tukano name for this gesture). They execute some rhythmic beats with the pestle-tube (it is what is called yuxkō-mēra doxkesé) and some steps with the right foot forward and back (du'tisé). Then the line moves (nikā-kā echanō-kātyāra baxsasé) to the right and to the left until the circumference is closed, making some turns from the left to the right (sūtōasé) (134).

134. They explained to us that they are imitating the bavari fish, which, before depositing its eggs, makes a few turns.

533 At the same time the men slowly sing unintelligible words, with a
535 frequent burden in which are sounded many times the syllables "paia-paia." The rhythm is accelerated at the end, and a cry and a heavy stroke with the rhythm tubes end the first part. During this
[562] part the women remained seated in conversation near the door, to the left of anyone who enters (135).

• [123]

135. We, the three civilized observers, were to be found on the opposite side, at the right.

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If the flight does not take place, the marriage is considered realized.

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A short time later they customarily take a nuptial trip, on which the young man, accompanied by his wife, goes to visit the father-in-law, taking him presents (smoked fish, fruit, etc.), and thus the friendly relations will be strengthened. These nuptial trips, moreover, appear in the legends.

*[192]

The wife will take with her, for the new home, as dowry or property, her pi'kamō, that is, a small cipo basket, with her ornaments, utilitarian objects, and a cluster of leaves containing ōnōñā powder (carajurú /carajura/).

Immediately in the first days of the marriage the husband will give the wife a beating. He will hit her, however, with the hands, so they assured us; and she cannot react. Although it is a matter of a custom that aims at finding out the good will of the girl and her capacity for suffering, it seems, nevertheless, that it is the circumstance of some misunderstanding between the spouses that will provide the opportunity for this beating.

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a) /sic; 5/ Relations between the spouses.

The relations between the spouses are normal enough. Perhaps they might be called friendly (18),

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18. We had the opportunity to travel with a Karapanā family from the headwaters of the Papurí and to see the wife in a long and cordial conversation with the husband.

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although without caresses and other displays of affection, since it is certain that some familiarity will arise from their living together. The husband will fear that bad treatment will drive away the wife (19),

19. Several episodes have been reported to us. In the beginning of 1954, during our stay in

/419 cont./

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/footnote 24 cont./ identified with such a person (or object). To pronounce this name is to render present that person or sacred object, which is not licit (religious taboo, properly speaking). Or to pronounce the name of a person (for example, that of one's own husband, among tribes of southern India -- cf. Gordon, o. c. 132) will make him die (it is the magic taboo).

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They will simply say to identify her: -- "The wife of such-and-such a person" or "The mother of such-and-such a person." The husband will use this expression: "Yō pōrá-kó," "the mother of my children," or "the one who gives me children," or "the mother of N" and says the name of the oldest child.

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* [192]

Her tasks are constant, heavy, and of great responsibility. Perhaps in a precarious state of health, for example, during gestation and the delivery, even so, she does them perfectly, without complaining, because they are tribal regulations, therefore they come from a superior will (25).

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25. If, in front of the husband, we purposely show surprise at her great tasks, the woman smiles and says nothing.

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The planting and the cleaning of the clearing fall to her. She will spend whole hours in the sun amid the fire and the smoke, preparing the piles of branches to be burned, digging and burying the mandioca shoots, cleaning the clearing by the process of pulling out the weeds by hand, Taá kuresé. She is the one who pulls the mandioca, collects it in the aturás /carrying baskets/, and brings it home, where, afterwards, she peels it, grates it, squeezes it, and strains it, in order to make flour. It is she who prepares the foods and the caxiris, takes care of the house and of the rearing of the children. All this while the husband perhaps is idle in

/423 cont./

534 At the great feast of Wāx-tf, the most solemn part is forbidden
562 to her. She can not witness it, she can not see the mysterious
778 instrument, under the penalty of death.

784 She must not know the great tidings about the origins of the
796 tribe. We have the impression that the most perspicacious of the
women might know almost all that the most accomplished men
know about the legends, but with the conviction, painful for them,
of not knowing a great deal and the principal part. As a matter
of fact, we have heard the same legends told by /424/ men and
women (31).

31. No woman could tell us the origin of the
instrument Mfif. In order not to wound the
susceptibilities of the natives, we did not let
them read this legend, which the men had
told us in confidence, or see the instrument
tabooed for them.

The totality of the men know nothing more than the women. They
have only one advantage: having seen the mysterious, sacred
instrument, the Mfif, and having made it sound. For their part,
perhaps all the women imagine that the instrument that the men
sound is really Wāx-tf.

562 More than anything, however, the moral decadence, this
831 indeed, is maximal in the native woman of the Uaupesina tribes.
Carrying the defects of a moral perversion perhaps millennial, she
feels the sexual impulses commandingly. The customs facilitate
their satisfaction and, therefore, also their aggravation. But, for
this same reason, they put them at the mercy of the males, whom
they must always heed.

[835] Daughter, and later mother, the customs go so far as to impose
on her incest with a religious character. In the exercise of these
relations, of course, degrading practices will not be lacking.

/428 cont. /

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Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, the mother will have invited another woman to assist her. The latter, as if she were the godmother of the parturient woman, acquires some rights over her: she will call her Max-kōá (goddaughter), and she, in turn, will call her Pax-koá (godmother) and must render her the services requested.

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In order to conjure away any evil for the newborn child, the pajé or a Komū will come to "blow on it," and on its mother, with the smoke from his cigar, said Dorotéia Brito. As a preventive against sickness, he will mark the child's face with numerous, but small red spots with the magical substance carajurú /carajura/.

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*[192]

3) Nihf-pkō ("Couvade" or chōco /hatching/).

The chōco (Couvade) is in force among the tribes of the Uaupés (44).

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44. From some legends of obvious patriarchalist origin it follows that the chōco did not always exist. And that it was the woman who used to take to the hammock during her discomfort. The narrator, Dorotéia Brito, at a certain point in the legend, /this footnote is continued on the next page in the original source/ added spontaneously that "formerly it was the woman who lay in the hammock."

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As soon as the child is born, the mother, with the help of the Pax-koá, cuts the umbilical cord. Formerly they did it by hitting it between two stones, nowadays with a cutting grass, the tiririca /Scleria tenacissima/, or a splinter of taquara, or /429/ even scissors (45).

• [123]

45. The tuxaua of the Íde-masf tribe of the headwaters of the Komé-ya, tributary of the Pirá-paraná, urgently asked us to bring him some scissors, whose usefulness he had heard mentioned, on our next visit.

592. /462 cont./

622 and directs the collective work of the women, especially the
574 preparations for the caxiris and dabacuris. It is incumbent on
her to greet and to thank, in the name of the women, the guests
/463/ who came to the feast in the maloca. In certain dances
[535] she has the distinctive role of soloist, Yôhōgô or Nô'mô-Bayá
*[192] (VII - 4, e (2 a 2)). /Footnote 98 apparently belongs here,
although the index number is missing./

• [123]

98. At a great feast which we had the opportunity to attend among the Wanana of Carurú-cachoeira, river Uaupés, we saw the wife of the Tuxaua in one of the intervals of the dances approach the group of women who were seated and rebuke them. We suppose that it might have been due to the women's indecision in appearing for the preceded dance number.

797 On the occasion of the death of the Tuxaua of Parí-cachoeira,
622 the Tukano Júlio, on July 5, 1954, we had the opportunity to see some documents carefully kept by the deceased and his family, that is, a manuscript with the appointment successively of his great-grandfather, João Silgueira, and grandfather, Manoel Silgueira, for the position of Capitão of Parí-cachoeira, appointment made by the Capuchin Missionary Frei Venâncio Zilocchi, on December 5, 1882, with the visa, dated August 7, 1923, of Padre João Báizola, Salesian. Another letter of appointment with printed heading, signed by the Capuchin Frei Gesualdo Marchetti, on May 30, 1885, also with the visa of Padre João Báizola, of August 7, 1923. The following are the contents of these documents:

I, below signed, Frei Venancio Zilocchi, Apostolic Franciscan Missionary of the Rio Tiquih., tributary of the Rio Uaupés, and Director of the Missions established on it, appoint Capitão of the Mission of S. Pedro d'Alcantara the Senhor principal of the said Mission, João Silgueira, and in his absence the Older

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be interesting and he recorded tribal distributions and physical conditions of life as well as many customs. It is to Wallace that we owe the first report on mortuary endocannibalism among the Cubeo. Curiously, this information has never been properly authenticated. Wallace learned about it at second hand, as did Koch-Grünberg many years later. I observed what I thought to be this custom, but I could not verify that the bones being prepared for imbibing with chicha were human. The annoyance of the Indians when I accidentally came upon them while they were reducing bones to meal and pouring it into the chicha at the conclusion of a mourning ceremony led me to suspect that the bones were human. In response to my questions, however, no Cubeo would confirm my conjectures. 114 114 266 [123] •

Wallace (1870, p. 354) traveled up the Vaupés to the mouth of the Cuduiari River at the rapids of Uaracapurí, where he observed a community of several malocas. He did not enter the Cuduiari, reporting only that to his knowledge no European had ever gone up that river. As for the Vaupés, this river, particularly in its Brazilian reaches, had in Wallace's time already become an important artery of European trade. Along the Isana River Wallace noted that the Indians were living in European-style dwellings. The Cuduiari then had the reputation of a totally wild region. The Cubeo Indians seen by Wallace were still wearing large circular wooden plugs in their ears. By 1903, in the time of Koch-Grünberg, this form of male ornamentation had already been given up. 114 (301)

Curt Nimuendajú surveyed the Isana, Aiari, and Vaupés rivers in 1927. In his notes, published posthumously in 1950, it is revealed that he correctly identified Tucano and Cubeo descent groups as patrilineal clans. He did not, however, enter the Cuduiari, and his information on that river, being secondhand, is not too reliable.

My own field work on the Cuduiari began in September 1939 and continued through June 1940. (Goldman, 1948, is a preliminary report.) The Cuduiari had the advantage of being relatively accessible and as yet almost completely unacculturated. I decided upon the Cuduiari after a survey of the Cubeo communities along the Vaupés. 114 101

CULTURE CHANGE

Cubeo culture has been subjected to acculturative influences from two sources, one from other Indian tribes and the other from European, Colombian, and Brazilian missionaries, settlers, traders, and latex extractors. Cultural interchange among Indian tribes in the Northwest Amazon region is, of course, an old and intricate process. 177

men have learned to wear trousers and a cotton tunic at home. For ceremony, however, they wear only the perineal band, now made of trade cloth. For women the skirt has replaced the ornamental ceremonial apron, but for men ceremonial participation in trousers means an important change in outlook in which the ceremony has become secularized. I learned this from young Indian men, visitors to the Cuduiari, who, wearing the cotton trousers and tunic of the mestizo, insisted in explaining to me that they were taking part in dances "just for fun." In the truly solemn ceremonies on the Cuduiari I saw no man in European dress.

The use of Spanish or Portuguese is another sign of change in cultural identification. But here, too, the process is complex. Indian cosmopolitanism is traditionally multilingual. Wives often speak distinct dialects of Tucanoan or else speak Cariban or Arawakan. Children learn the language of the mother first and then learn to speak Cubeo. The Tupian lingua franca has been a traditional trade language between Indians as well as between Indian and white for a very long time. Thus, the Indian who has learned Spanish and Portuguese is simply extending his multilingualism. These European languages have also come to play an important role in native interrelationships. Spanish and/or Portuguese has become the customary language of violent drunken quarrels among men at a drinking party. Used in this context the insults and threats in a foreign language are less ominous, and easier, therefore, to disregard than the same words uttered in the native language. The Cubeo usage is as with us: the foreign phrase used scatologically modifies the impact. Thus, in this respect the Cubeo adoption of foreign European phrases is a matter of enriching the native culture and is far from being a mark of cultural breakdown. I met only a few Indians on the Vaupés and none on the Cuduiari who had given up their native speech in favor of Spanish or Portuguese.

The use of European personal names offers another example of adaptation to the native cultural pattern. Among the Cubeo, personal names come from the traditional genealogy of the sib. They have a sacred character and are not used freely. Knowing a person's sib name is a sign of intimacy and such intimacy is not readily yielded up. I did not learn native personal names for weeks, and even at the end, one of the more embarrassing questions I could ask was simply a person's sib name. In common discourse kinship designations were used. The native name is not so much an appellation as it is sib identification. The headman of the *Bahikiwa* sib was the first to tell me his name. He uttered it in a whisper close to my ear. Thus, for the Cubeo,

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20 THE CUBEO

177 Thus, for the Cubeo,

551 being endowed with a Spanish or Portuguese name is one of the most
182 exciting and valued gifts he can get from a white man. It is a benefice
he cherishes far more than the white man can possibly appreciate. It
[553] has a double value, as a gift and as a free medium of appellation. I
[123] met no Indian no matter how unacculturated who did not have a
European name. To have value the name should be bestowed by a
white man. When I bestowed names upon newborn children, as well
as upon youngsters who were still unnamed, I was asked to give the
genealogical references for the name from my own family line. I
learned of no Indian child on the Cuduiari who had a European
name that had not been bestowed upon him by a white man, and the
Indians remembered the genealogical references. It cannot be said
that the possession of a European name gave the Indian an actual
sense of kinship with the white man, for which far more than a name
would be required. But the name did serve to offset to some degree
the conventional estrangement between Indian and white.

177 On the whole, culture change on the Vaupés and along its tribu-
[797] taries has been gradual except for those instances where missionaries
have brought Indians together into a mission village. In 1930 the
European economy of the Vaupés had no strong interest in a "civi-
lized" Indian. The exploitation of wild rubber — there were no culti-
vated rubber plantations in the region — was on a small scale for
which the labor of "wild" Indians was altogether suitable. Nor did
[464] the undeveloped economy of Mitú call for disciplined Indian labor.
At the level at which the economy of the Vaupés had developed in
1930 the Indian was of greater value in his native state, simply because
as an Indian and completely self-sufficient he was at least no burden
upon the meager resources of an underdeveloped frontier area.

177 Many Indians of the Cuduiari had visited Mitú, the capital of the
648 *Comisaria* of the Vaupés. Mitú was established as the capital in
1936. Before that it was a small trading center and missionary station.
After 1936 it began to acquire the features of an important adminis-
trative center (Plazas Olarte, 1944). By 1939 it had an administration
building, a school for Indian children, a medical dispensary, a new
missionary order, partly Colombian and partly French, a radio sta-
tion, a landing wharf for a monthly military hydroplane, and a police
garrison. The population, numbering about 1,000, consisted mainly
of Colombians, a few Brazilians, and a floating group of Indians
drawn to the administrative center by curiosity or by some business.
Many Indian women lived there as wives of white men.

While the Indians of the Vaupés and of the Cuduiari were not
altogether comfortable in Mitú, because of their shyness in dealing

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with its white residents, they had no reason not to regard it as a friendly place. The *Comisaria* protected their labor rights, supervising terms of contract and entertaining their complaints of unfair treatment. When an Indian completed his term of labor he was "paid off" in the presence of an official in charge of Indian affairs. The Indians regarded the government as fair. The *Comisaria* provided medical aid to those Indians who came to seek it. At the same time it respected native life and interfered with the Indians as little as possible. Although the Cuduiari is readily accessible from Mitú it was entered only rarely by administrative personnel. When I lived among the *Bahúkiwa* some 15 hours by canoe from Mitú, I had the sense of total isolation from this administrative center. The normal everyday life on the Cuduiari was completely Indian. In the time of Wallace there had been bad blood between Indians and Colombians, but by the time Koch-Grünberg arrived relations between the Cubeo and the government had already become peaceable.

In Mitú I met Mandú, headman of the *Bahúkiwa* sib of the middle Cuduiari. He had come to seek medical treatment for his young son, who had injured his knee in a fall. The headman and I became friends and he invited me to visit. When I promptly accepted his invitation I was surprised to find that he had already begun to build a house for me and that the Indians had expected me to settle among them. He had discussed the matter with his people, he told me later, and they had agreed that it would be good to have me live among them. The reasons for wanting me never became too clear, but I came to believe that they thought I would offer them some protection from the pressure of the labor recruiters.

I was informally "adopted" as the younger brother of Mandú. For a while people were amused to address me by an appropriate kinship term. In time this jest lost its freshness and I came to be regarded simply as *pakomá* (kinsman). Nevertheless, I was considered to be a member of Mandú's household even though I had a house of my own alongside the maloca. Mandú sent his older wife, with whom he was no longer living, to serve as my cook. With Mandú's household I had all the privileges of informality. My relations with other households were friendly but more restrained. Since I did not contribute an appropriate share of fish and game to the household, or to the maloca as a whole, I felt obliged to reciprocate food and services with periodic gifts of cloth, tobacco, fishhooks, and ammunition. At one time during a drinking party at which I was not present, a son of Mandú distributed all my trade goods to the guests "in my behalf." However, during the period of many weeks when I no longer had trade goods

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my status in the community was as before. I still could count upon food and services.

I participated to some degree in the male life of the community and came to learn the language and the culture as much by slow enculturation as by questioning. I had no principal informants because no one would serve in that capacity. All were willing to talk, to explain matters to me, but only in the accustomed atmosphere of easy and genial chatter. The people I knew best and the household of Mandú, in particular, were paradoxically the poorest systematic informants. They were most impatient and most easily vexed with the informant role. They regarded the open notebook and the persistent line of questioning as counter to our relationship. For prolonged and probing investigations I called upon the head of a *Bahúkiwa* subsh. Even this man was a very patient informant only when he was my guest among the *Bahúkiwa*. On his home grounds we were back on small talk. In Mitú I could talk to Indian women more freely than I could on the Cuduiari, where my relations with them had to be more correct. My house alongside the maloca was an informal social center which children and unattached women felt free to visit without invitation. The children taught me things they thought I ought to know about native customs. This was a privilege they had which adults, with their acute tactfulness about criticizing, intruding, or imposing upon others, could not exercise.

The Indians placed no serious obstacles in the way of my studies. They would not explain or discuss openly a ritual act at the time it was going on because to do so would be to counteract its effects.

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They did not, however, mind answering questions later and in a more general context. Moreover, they expected me to preserve the proprieties of tact in asking questions about domestic matters. Sex was a difficult subject, as were invidious comparisons. The Cubeo are not eager purveyors of gossip. After trouble had erupted in the open one could ask for and receive a discreet and sober account of some domestic difficulty. At the same time that the Indians imposed upon me their own reserve they were also sensitive to any evident disappointment when my questions went unanswered. Thus, if I persisted I often could get an answer, but I had to follow protocol, since personal relations among adults are rich in decorum and social etiquette. I also had available to me the more informal channels of the play pack of children, which delighted in passing on some household gossip, as well as of old women, whose verbal bawdiness was in marked contrast to the customary verbal restraint of the men on sexual matters.

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I chose to stay in one community and to benefit from the intimacy

always tended to occupy the narrow headwaters of tributaries while the strong and the top-ranking sibs have favored the large rivers and their mighty cataracts. But while these strong and proud sibs in their exposed positions were able to withstand enemy Indians, they have succumbed more to Colombian and Brazilian missionaries and traders. Thus, the sibs that the Indians refer to as our "head" are now the most acculturated, and the low-ranking sibs the least.

I estimate the population of the Cúbeo at under 2,500. This is a crude figure based on a calculation of somewhat under 100 persons per sib on the Cuduiari, the only river that I had occasion to explore along its entire length. Population was undoubtedly greater in the past. On the Cuduiari there were 29 main residence sites,² each averaging some 30 to 35 people, some only a few minutes by canoe from their nearest neighbors, but for the most part they were separated by at least an hour of steady canoeing. This is high population density for the region. On other rivers in the region, houses are separated by at least half a day's journey by canoe. A severe influenza epidemic swept the region in 1917-18 and took a heavy toll of lives, the Indians say. A number of sibs whose names are still remembered are now extinct. The Colombian government census of 1938, which did not tally tribes, listed some 7,000 Indians for the entire *Comisaría del Vaupés* (Colombia, 1942). This figure, too, is surely an estimate, since an accurate head count is virtually impossible. During the period of my stay among them, the Indians, in a state of alarm over rumors that their young men were all to be conscripted for labor in the rubber forests, were understandably nervous about censuses and genealogical explorations so that my own efforts at counting were severely handicapped.

The term "Cúbeo" is a Europeanization of the Tucanoan word *kebéwa*, that means, literally, "the people that are not." It is a jest name applied to them by some other Tucanoan-speaking tribe. Most Indians were not aware that they were called "Cúbeos," while those who understood what it meant did not like the name. Strictly speaking, there is no tribal name. A man will always identify himself by his sib name, never by phratry and never by tribe. In the course of discussions with the ethnologist on native conceptions of "tribe" the Indians offered some self-designations. The most common was *pamiwa* (first people). They also offered *pwáwua* (people), and then referred to other tribes as *apépwáwua* (other people). I doubt, however, that any Cúbeo Indian has ever spontaneously declared himself to be a

² There is a list of these communities at the end of this chapter.

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CUBEO

361 Cubeo do not themselves make this identification. The outermost
 462 zone, that of manioc cultivation, is largely a female province. Men
 244 make the clearing, but women work in the gardens. A woman's garden
 is virtually her private domain. A man enters it upon a woman's invitation. A husband goes there to help with some heavy task or for casual sexual intercourse. There is extra spice to marital coitus in the garden because it is the traditional place for adultery and so the Indians associate it with licentious passion. Men do not ordinarily wander over to the manioc gardens. When I wanted to see the women at work in their gardens I was not free to go without an escort, who was usually the husband himself or sometimes the headman. In the latter case, the headman courteously informed the husband, and everyone else if the husband was away. Frequent visiting was definitely discouraged. Women could not help but attribute sexual significance to a man's visit and would deride the notion that a man was interested in watching them farm.

244 This outer zone, then, has a decided sexual connotation that is
 361 both erotic and social. Women give birth in their manioc gardens
 831 and during male cult ceremonies they may take shelter in the gardens.
 [84] Nursing babies are brought to the manioc gardens regardless of sex,
 [85] but from walking age on, no boy will think of playing in the vicinity of the gardens. Manioc is a strictly secular crop for which there are no rites, despite its overwhelming nutritive importance and the usual hazards of cultivation.

361 From the sexual point of view, the zone of secondary cultivation
 241 is a mixed one. Secondary crops include sugar cane, tobacco, *mihí*
 462 (*kaapi*, a vision-inducing narcotic), coca, calabash, gourd, squash,
 [27] melons, yams, sweet potatoes, and sometimes maize. There are also
 [24] cultivated trees—orange, lemon, pupunha (*Guilielma speciosa*),
 pineapple, plantain, and banana. Men exclusively cultivate tobacco, *mihí*, and coca, women exclusively cultivate bitter manioc; all other plantings are mixed. If a plant, onions, for example, is taken from the whites and the Indians have seen a white man grow it, they then regard it as a proper male cultivation. Maize is an old crop that belongs to women but not all communities grow it. Among the *Bahukina* and its neighboring subunits no maize was planted.³ This

³ When Koch Grünberg was on the Cudulari, in 1923, he observed that the upper communities grew only maize and no manioc. For bitter manioc, he said, they came to the lower Cudulari communities (1923, II, 28). During my survey of the river I found no community without manioc. On the other hand, maize, which had already begun to disappear in the time of Koch-Grünberg, had become quite rare and no longer entered into the regular diet. On certain ceremonial occasions it was made up into tortillas. Mainly it was used in native beer and as

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in or around the maloca, loafing, jesting, or in jovial groups working at small manufactures such as basketry. It is the wives and their daughters who are dispersed, each in her separate garden, and who then return in the heat of the day, tired and subdued, to a house that is gay with the laughter and chatter of the men.

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In the recent past, no more than a generation or two ago, the inner zone of the community was separated, indeed virtually isolated, from the manioc gardens by a ten-foot-deep defensive moat set with sharpened stakes. Tree trunks crossed its steep walls to serve as narrow foot walks for the sure-footed women. At night, or in anticipation of an enemy, the footbridges were withdrawn. The house and the plaza then were an inner citadel. The moat protected against surprise attack. When enemies were sighted or their presence announced by the angry growling of the dogs they were met as far from the residence as possible, and the moat served as a defensive line to cover retreat. The strategy then was to lure the attackers to fall into the moat while the defenders slipped across their secretly placed bridges. If the people felt themselves to be overwhelmed they scattered to safety through the dense forest, abandoning house and possessions. (Houses still have an escape port at a side wall facing the forest.) But if they were confident they left the women and children behind in the house with a small guard. I had the privilege of this guard duty on one occasion. I was instructed to cover the escape of the women and children if need be. Fortunately, there was no need.

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The canoe landing is little more than a level stretch of beach where a canoe can be pulled up out of the water. It is also the site for bathing, for drawing water, for washing manioc roots. It is a port. One rarely comes upon a community by land. Visitors pause at the landing to wash, adjust their apparel, and freshen up face and body paint before beginning the climb up the path leading to the plaza.

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Like the plaza, the orderliness of the canoe landing denotes the state of morale of a community. Some householders have carved steps into the clay bank, lined them with split logs, and provided a rail. Guests are never received at the landing. Courtesy requires that guests be allowed the privacy of arrival, and the hosts discreetly retire to the plaza to await them. There are ceremonies in which the arrival of spirit beings is an important feature. On such occasions the men who are to enact these beings use the canoe landing for donning masks and for other preparations. On these occasions, too, the canoe landing is a sanctuary from which all unauthorized persons discreetly retire.

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Before dawn the canoe landing is the favored place for marital

34 THE CUBEO

361 Caño dwellers are self-conscious; they enter-

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tain less and are reluctant to have visitors. I was never invited or encouraged to visit a caño dwelling house. I was always told that they did not care to have visitors.

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When a headman dies his house is ordinarily abandoned and the new headman undertakes to build a new maloca, since one requirement of the office is his ability to enlist his sibmates in working with him. Abandonment of a house, however, changes mainly the outlines of the clearing if a new site is chosen for the new maloca. A new maloca may be built alongside the old, in which case there is no change at all. Sometimes the new headman decides that the old site was the victim of evil forces and a new clearing is built. But against such a fear is the desire not to abandon still-productive manioc plantations. At all events, a new clearing is normally close enough to the old to ease the transition from last harvest to new harvest. When a site is moved the last harvest is drawn from the old, and cuttings from the old *chagra* (plantation) are planted in the new. Thus there is a transitional period when the community is actually working both clearings. The Cubeo regard this transition period as a difficult one, and until they are drawing a bitter manioc harvest from the new clearing they will be too preoccupied to hold drinking parties. Fruit trees on the old *chagra* are harvested as long as they bear fruit.

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The extent of a community's territory is such that it will be able to circulate within it more or less permanently, reoccupying after some 15 years land that has become reforested and so workable again. Boundaries are along a river only. Past the line of cultivation the forest is an undifferentiated darkness.

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The traditions of the Cubeo indicate that they were originally dwellers along the Vaupés, the main stream, and that they later moved up the smaller tributaries such as the Cuduiari and the Querari. The present distribution of sibs is also interesting in this connection in that high-ranking sibs live along the main stream or along the mouths of the tributaries, whereas the lower-ranking sibs occupy the headwaters of smaller streams. Sib status is definitely associated with location along a river. The back reaches of creeks deep in the forests are the refuge of the weak, whereas the strong occupy a stretch of river that has majesty either by sweep of water or by the character of its rapids. The main site of a sib that has become dispersed is always in a conspicuous part of a river whereas Satellites and Independents often move up small creeks. Father Antonio Gia-

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cone of the Salesian Mission has observed that the Tucano (referring to the tribe) never constructed their malocas in creeks but only along the main river. Occupying the main streams, he noted, they

501 against the gunwale to set the rhythm. Frequent changes of stroke
516 are common. In pulling away, the first stroke is slow and strong. This
is followed by a brief pause, the blade just out of the water, the stem
resting against the gunwale. The helmsman, who steers with a
broader-bladed paddle, uses powerful slow strokes that are one to
two or three to those of the prowsman. When inertia has been over-
come the stroke is accelerated, often to a furious tempo. The oars-
man's back bends lower and his stroke is sharp, fast, and shallow. A
fast beat is not kept up for long. The paddlers rest, permitting the
canoe to continue on its own momentum. Unless exhausted from a
long trip the mood of men in a canoe is gay. They burst into spon-
taneous shouts of *he ee ee*, sing, and joke loudly. Each passing bird is
addressed, as "Where are you going?" With the paddle held as a gun
they aim at the bird, pretend to shoot, and shout, "Now he is dead!"
On one occasion we chased a covey of herons downstream for about
two hours for amusement. The birds followed the river course, flying
some 100 yards before settling on a branch. Striking paddles against
the canoe and beating an empty gasoline tin, we drove the birds to
the communities. The Indians shouted, "We sent you herons, why
didn't you shoot them?"

501 The most important canoe positions are those of stroke and of
462 steersman. A woman traveling with men always steers, the lighter
work. She may even nurse her child while steering. Among boys,
each wants to be a steersman because it is easy. When the people are
in no hurry canoe positions are informally assigned; children then
occupy the stroke position, in a large canoe sitting side by side. They
also steer. On a long journey the prowsman or stroke is always the
strongest man, while a woman, or the oldest or weakest man, is at
the helm. Intermediate positions are filled by considerations of bal-
ance, each canoe known for its own balance characteristics.

502 All the Indians know the river and its currents. Downstream the
[823] canoe is piloted along the currents that sweep out from creeks, calling
for frequent crossovers; the center of the river is usually avoided be-
cause of the sun, the Indians preferring the shade of the shoreline.
Going upstream the canoe hugs the shore and in rapid currents the
men pull it along by seizing creepers. During low water, punting
poles replace paddles, and sometimes the riders get out and push.
High water offers cuts through the forest. I have timed these short
cuts against the regular passage downstream and found that there
is no actual saving. Threading through jungle lagoons in a large
canoe is time-consuming, but is less monotonous and tiring than the
direct passage. These passages lead often through dense brush that

an who has daughters to help her can prepare a surplus of mash that, covered with banana leaves or stored in a circular bark bin, holds over to the next day. Whatever time a woman spares from manioc cake preparation is immediately absorbed by other duties, among them the making of chicha and farinha, which is simply the manioc routine all over again. When a woman prepares manioc for chicha, however, she has the help of her husband, but only at those stages that are totally distinct from manioc cake preparation. The Cubeo tradition is for men to take no part in *duno* production, once they have made the clearing. Still, men do help their wives in peeling the manioc tuber. Since the knife has begun to supplant the teeth as a peeling implement, men, who are the most expert in handling knives, feel somewhat more free than formerly to help — but not without embarrassment. I once walked into the house and saw the headman sitting amiably beside his wife and peeling manioc with a knife. Were I a proper Cubeo I would have managed to appear as though I had seen nothing. But the sight was so unexpected I stared. The man flushed and dropped the knife and tuber. Then he collected himself and explained that his wife was not well and so he felt he should help her. He assured me, as his wife smiled, that he never did this ordinarily.

Whereas all women share the same general manioc routine, individual circumstances differ. A young married woman with young children has no one to help her and must work very hard in contrast to an older woman with several daughters who can relieve her of much of the work. A woman with many sons and no daughters has a very heavy burden. The men provide her with a very large garden, they eat heavily, they are sociable and plan drinking parties. An old woman living alone prepares her own small manioc cake ration, and worries rather that she can call on no man to enlarge her manioc garden. Yet in all these individual circumstances one observes leveling factors as well. The household with very young children eats less, has less need to entertain, and has smaller trade needs. The household with grown daughters eats more, entertains more — suitors and their parties for example — and has great needs for trade goods, skirts, and ornaments for the girls. The household with many men has greater access to trade goods through their wage labor and saves on farinha. An old woman living alone may eat with her close kin and so devote her manioc production entirely to farinha, if she desires. There are no significant differences in manioc cake consumption. Families differ only in the rather small prestige of owning trade goods and in

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A few communities

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rear ducks in the same manner, 231
and some Indians have experimented valiantly with rearing pigs as 235
pets.

The trade element in Cubeo experimentation with plants and 123
animals is important but not, to repeat, the exclusive interest. I had 245
been living among the *Bahukwa* a short time when they learned of 439
my liking for fruit. I was constantly presented with fruit, some wild
and some cultivated. I usually made some payment in the form of
a small gift. Word spread along the Cuduiari. One morning I saw
a fleet of a dozen canoes or so, each heaped high with bananas, plan-
tains, pineapple, lemons, and oranges, coming to the community.
It was all for me, brought in the expectation that I would reciprocate
with a gift. This transaction, however, was an unusual one, for nor-
mally the Indians have no market for any food product but dry
manioc - farinha. They have no great taste for fruit and grow more 262
than they normally consume for the sheer satisfaction of growing it. 302
Lemons, for example, are used by women to prepare a hair wash.

MANUFACTURES

Cubeco material culture is rather elaborate for a tropical forest 121
tribe, but not as fully developed as is that of the more westerly tribes 28
that have a cotton technology. Material culture has been treated by 32
Koch-Grünberg and is, moreover, fully covered in the *Handbook of*
South American Indians. I shall confine myself then to a discussion
of manufactures as it bears upon an understanding of Cubeco social
life.

There are few products made jointly by men and women. Men 28
ordinarily make all objects that are of wood or fiber, while women 32
specialize in ceramics. Thus, the great bulk of material equipment 462
has been made by men. This includes the house, all baskets and
trays, hammocks, canoes, signal drums, ceremonial objects, musical
instruments, weapons, and fishing gear. Women make pottery, in-
cluding the large ceramic plate of the manioc oven and the hourglass-
shaped pottery hearthstones. They also prepare gourds as dishes and
water containers since these supplement pottery dishes. There is a 415
small basket (*pobü*) in which personal articles are kept, and this is
made by young girls as well as by men. The only product that is jointly
made is the *pediba*, the manioc grating board. Men make the board,
execute a design on it, and women insert the bits of stone that form
the grating surface. Whatever is made is either as a specific gift or
to replace an object or utensil that is no longer serviceable. Men 462
work slowly and for short intervals, so that the completion of a 461

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business. The Indians are now aware that in their dealings with the whites their labor and their products have a fixed value with some leeway for bargaining. Direct commercial trade, object for object, is almost exclusively the province of the Indian women. This is not a new role for them because they also are active in intertribal and intersib trade. Because women do not have as much contact with whites as do their men they still inject into the commercial trading much that is traditional.

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The traditional attitude is that any exchange is part of a patterned social relationship. An exchange establishes a linkage between the principals and each is aware of his obligations and of the showing he must make. The obligation is of generosity, the temptation to give somewhat more than one has received. The impression to be made is that one does not haggle over objects. An exchange between a man and a woman who are sexually eligible to one another introduces the additional element of flirtatiousness. All of these elements enter into and complicate and enliven the farinha trade. The more experienced men are able to adapt to commercial methods, but since it is improper for a man to conduct his wife's business for her he will stand aside when she is trading her farinha.

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I never witnessed the intertribal trade, but when I pointed to an object and asked who had made it or where it had come from, its provenience and the nature of the transaction were always known. Manioc grating boards, for example, generally come from the Isana River. The Cubeo often traded European articles for tribal manufactures, less because they needed the tribal object than to satisfy another Indian's need for the European article. A Macú once wanted matches and gave a small basket for a box. The Macú baskets are highly valued, but in this case the initiative was with the Macú. An important principle of native trade in the area is that an object asked for must be surrendered. One must be careful, therefore, not to ask for something the owner might be reluctant to part with. Thus the *Buhikiwa* headman asked me as a condition of my staying in his community not to offer to buy ceremonial objects. "If you ask for them," he explained, "we shall have to give them to you. How shall we replace them?" Thus, there is an element of delicacy in intertribal trade. At the same time there is a compulsion to engage in trade so as to give significance to the meeting of people of different tribes. In sum, while intertribal trade eventually satisfies the requirements of the Indians for specialized objects they would not ordinarily have, each individual transaction responds to motives that are often only indirectly economic. Trade objects circulate readily. Thus, a set of

use it, and, as the others do, he shares his catch with the community. Weir sites are inherited by a son so that there is some tendency for this specialty in fishing to descend in certain families and not in others.

In objects there are two main kinds of property rights, those of the community and those of the individual. Community rights are in all objects made for public use by the headman or his wife, such as a large canoe, great chicha urns, the manioc oven, the sugar cane press, and guest benches. Of a somewhat less public nature are ceremonial objects and musical instruments also made by the headman or by an aspirant to his office. The first group of objects are fully in the public domain and subject to constant use. The second group are in the possession of their maker and are brought out by him alone on the proper occasion. Full individual ownership resides in all other personal possessions: household utensils, canoes, weapons, trinkets and ornaments, all trade goods from Europeans, and items of clothing. Disposition of these objects is subject entirely to the discretion of the owner.

Infants also own property and their rights are more or less respected. Sometimes a planting is set in an infant's name by the parent or grandparent. A mother commonly dedicates a brood of chicks to her nursing child. The feeling is that, as with ornaments, possessions confer human status. That is, a person should own things. If the child is old enough to understand possession it assumes charge, more or less, otherwise its possessions are administered by its mother. I have negotiated, for example, the purchase of chickens owned by children. In one instance a mother prevailed upon her little boy to sell me a chicken. After the sale was made, however, the child wailed miserably so that I felt obliged to make him a gift of it. His mother kept the purchase price and announced that she owed the child the value of the chicken. When the child does not understand the transaction, its mother announces publicly the facts of ownership and her intentions to make restitution.

The attitude of the Cubeo toward personal possessions is best described as casual. They are not indifferent to objects but they regard strongly proprietary feelings as improper. Their attitude toward ownership is governed by the important status principle that giving is honorific. Among sibilmates objects circulate freely, the closer the tie between people the more active the exchanges. Sisters exchange ornaments and trinkets and men borrow freely from one another with or without permission. They seem to be most free with objects of economic utility, such as a canoe, weapons, implements, and somewhat

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animals. When the animals had been butchered, the wives of the married hunters and the mothers of the unmarried hunters carried off the first cuts of meat, the internal organs, and scraps. (The stomach and intestines are not eaten and are thrown immediately into the river.) Each woman took the meat from the animal belonging to "her" man and boiled it at her own hearth. Then all the boiled meat was heaped upon clean banana leaves at the household of the mother of the older unmarried hunter. She was an old woman no longer a part of the household of her husband. She was chosen to be honored by her son because of her ordinarily underprivileged situation. The entire community was invited to eat. The hosts and their households took a portion of this meat aside and ate alone, to emphasize clearly that they were givers. When this meat had been eaten, portions of the remainder, haunches, were distributed to those households that did not ordinarily provide animal game, in this case the household of a widow and the household of an old man. The older woman who had been honored gave, on her son's behalf, to the widow; the elder of the hunters presented a haunch to the old man. The greater part of the meat was appropriated by each hunter's household for smoking. This meat belonging to its respective hunter was then shared with the rest of the community at the collective evening meals. Each of these households, however, had the privilege, of course, of eating as much of the meat as it wished at any other time.

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Wild fruits, grubs, and ants, that is to say, foodstuffs foraged by women, are consumed more informally. Fruits are simply heaped upon the floor of the maloca to be eaten at will. When women bring in grubs and ants, that are commonly roasted on the communal manioc oven, those who wish to join the informal feast gather about the oven and help themselves. Foraged foods are not regarded as meals but as tidbits. There is still another form of informal eating. When a man returns home from any strenuous activity he is immediately given some food by his wife or mother.

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Food has symbolic significance for all people. The Cubeo always attach social meaning to the exchange of food. Food does not pass casually from person to person merely as a means of assuaging hunger. People visiting other sibs carry food with them because unless they are drawn into the life of the host sib in such a way as to give them true family status they cannot count upon being fed. The *Bahikiwa* were endlessly annoyed with me because a visiting trader or labor recruiter could count on having a meal with me. "Why do you feed him when you don't even know him?" they would ask incredulously. For some time thereafter the attitude toward me would be one of re-

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serve, perhaps of suspicion, as though the meal had established a relationship between me and the "enemy." Because, at their insistence, I lived among the *Bahúkiwa* as an "Independent" in a small hut of my own I shared only in the festive meals. But when I traveled with them and took part in what they were doing I shared in the food of whatever household I happened to be most closely associated with in the current activities.

Men give game and fish to their wives and to their mothers. If there is to be a further distribution to other women the wives and mothers usually make it. When a man gives fish or game to a girl whom he may marry he will have declared his intentions. In ceremonial friendship, food exchange between men and women is a most important token of closeness of relationship. In food preparation the Cubeo follow the common tropical forest pattern: women boil, men bake and broil.

The visitor to a maloca is given a pepper pot (*byn*) in which to dip a bit of manioc cake. This offering of the pepper pot is a token of feeding; it may even be refreshing to a weary traveler but it is not food; it is in lieu of food. The casual visitor is received into the coolness of the house and is offered the visitor's bench near the door. When he is seated, the headman's wife appears with a small pot of boiled capsicum peppers which she sets on the ground before him. She withdraws after inviting him to eat. She then comes back with a tray on which is a manioc cake or a portion of one, sets this before the pepper pot, and withdraws. Then each woman of a household brings forward her own pot of peppers and adds manioc cake to the tray of the headman's wife. When the guest is alone with the pepper pots he leaves the bench, and, crouching, dips small bits of manioc into the pepper pot, taking care to taste of each. He does not eat as though hungry, but solemnly, just tasting. He returns quickly to the bench and the women come forward and remove the pots. That is the extent to which a guest is fed. The offering of *byn* and manioc cake has a precise meaning. It is enough food to betoken hospitality. On the other hand, the peppers are of a class of excitant substances that are suitable for the atmosphere of excitation when guests are entertained. Food formality is most marked among the elders and most relaxed among younger men either not yet married or newly wed. I have seen such young men visiting another sib mock the formalities of the pepper pot with their age mates and even join in a family meal. When they do so they make it clear that they are jesting.

Within the maloca there are two eating arrangements. One, within the household, is informal, and the other, collective or maloca-wide, is formal. In informal eating, husband, wife, and children of both sexes

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he is really "cutting up" he will choose an old woman and so draw upon truly licensed ribaldry. When the women are left with their portion they carry on in the same convivial spirit. Household meals by contrast are solemn. When a meal is finished they rinse the mouth with water, using the fingers to scrub the teeth, and finally they wash their hands in a "finger bowl" of water. In some upstream houses, though, I noticed hands being wiped on the house posts.

Guests who have come for a drinking party or other ceremony will ordinarily eat very little for the duration. At the mourning ceremony, which lasts three full days, the hosts prepare a few corn cakes and tie these to the house posts for a hungry guest. But they prepare no more than about one corn cake for every three guests or so. Moreover, by tying the cakes to the house posts rather than serving them in a dish they are clearly indicating that this is not a meal. If people wish to eat during these three days they must bring their own provisions. Needless to say, a person hungry enough to ask for food will be fed; and at the protracted mourning rites there is a certain amount of scrounging upon the food resources of the hosts, but of an informal and almost underhanded nature. Women feel freer about passing food to one another and the men surreptitiously nibble at it. The Cubeo expect an adult male to tolerate hunger under any circumstances, and not to feel hunger at all during a ceremony. They expect women to live up to this standard but partially, and they are completely tolerant of the young, who may or may not eat on these occasions as they see fit.

Eating is considered a social activity occurring in a number of specified social settings, all of which involve Cubeo notions of intimacy. The sib is the normal outer limit of intimacy with respect to eating. However, guests may be temporarily assimilated into the sib if they take part in all of its activities, such as the woman cultivating a borrowed manioc garden and the man hunting and fishing. When they have been so assimilated they may eat as sib members do. The eating problem involves the overnight guest. There is no taboo against inviting even an overnight guest to join in a sib meal. It is rather that host and guest alike regard this as a most delicate matter. It is embarrassing to eat with people who are not intimates. Most often I have seen guests huddled in a corner eating a cold supper of old manioc cake and some dried fish they have brought with them. They are surrounded by a wall of privacy since the hosts will not look at them and they will not look at the hosts while they are eating. Before I understood the Cubeo sentiments about eating I inadvertently caused a visiting woman acute embarrassment. She and her husband,

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● 123 passing by downstream, had paused among the *Bahikiwa* to pay a courtesy call. The woman was hungry and drew some provisions to eat. She then noticed that I was looking at her as she ate, so she turned her back. Puzzled by this, I asked the *Bahikiwa* headman what it meant. He said, "That is the way some people are." When the woman heard me ask, she reached in among her things and fetched out a mat which she set around her like a screen. From behind the screen she completed her meal.

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758 The Cubeo seem to regard food as markedly secular, and this may explain why the sick who are supernaturally afflicted must avoid all foods except for some manioc cake.

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[857] The play of young boys often involves food. The young male pack fishes for minnows, traps small game, and forages in the nearby forest for ants, grubs, and fruits. They share all food equally, except that a boy aspiring to be a leader takes a smaller share for himself. This attitude of leadership has its counterpart among adult males. Within the *maloca* a leader — not necessarily the headman — makes a point of sharing the food he has with the sib even if it is no more than a small fish. Those who are not leaders and who do not aspire to leadership consume small catches of game and fish in the household, reasoning that they have only enough for one family.

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431 In view of the symbolic significance of food, its involvement in leadership and in social intimacies, it is not surprising that a good part of social and individual pathology should involve disturbances of conventional patterns of sharing. Two kinds of disturbance came to my notice; one, the more common, a pathological nonsharing, and the other a pathological stealing of food. Nonsharing appears early in the male play pack and continues, I suspect, into adult life. Food disorders affect males far more because only they are expected to uphold the amenities of food sharing. Like their mothers, girls are attached only to a household, forming no play pack. If they forage for foodstuffs it is in company with their mothers and for the use of the household or the sib. Some boys in a play pack take the share of food that has been given them and hide behind a tree, crouch behind a bush, or turn their backs while eating. They are even stealthy in eating food that they have obtained by their own efforts. A boy [123] once came to my hut and asked for food. I gave him a banana. He crawled under a table, turned his back to me, and gulped it, while his companions were outside the door waiting for him to come out. I am certain they knew what he was doing, but even the youngest Cubeo boy has learned the courtesy of ignoring poor manners in

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to his father for personal attention. On the whole, a child is at a greater disadvantage if it has lost a parent of its own sex, that is, a girl with a stepmother, a boy with a stepfather. A girl with a stepmother has a hard life of chores and of open neglect. A boy with a stepfather does not have a hard life at all in the material sense. He is deprived more subtly of intimacy with a paternal figure, and this usually shows itself in his own reserve with respect to his fellows. If he has no father at all the effect upon his personality is even more marked.

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My direct acquaintance with the situation of a true orphan is limited to the observation of one case among the *Bahúkiwa*. This was a girl from another tribe who had lost both parents and was adopted by the *Bahúkiwa* headman as his "daughter." The little girl, about nine, was addressed as "daughter" but held the status in the household of a servant. She took on the heaviest chores and was almost never free to play. Her lowly status was truly stigmatized by her lack of possessions. She was the only child among the Cubeo whom I had ever seen unadorned, until I gave her a necklace which she was allowed to keep. The children of the household enjoyed beating her as a way of teasing her, rather than wickedly. She took their pinchings and cuffings good-naturedly, on the whole, and had learned to pretend not to notice. Once, in the presence of the headman, her "father," the children were overdoing their teasing. She looked imploringly at the headman. Finally, she caught his eye and he said to her, "It is all right for you to run away." He saw no need to reprimand his own children.

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In reading Giaccone (1949) on the Turano tribe I found my observations on orphans corroborated. He, too, reported that orphans do not lack food but that they appear to be melancholy.

CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP

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A parallel to the brother-sister relationship is the *hikū-hiko* relationship, a ceremonial friendship. These terms, formed by combining the possessive prefix with the gender suffix, connote a relationship of exceptional closeness. The linguistic significance of possessive prefix and gender suffix for kinship terms has already been brought out. The curious feature of *hikū* and *hiko* is that these terms are composed of the two intimate-indicating particles.⁹ The ceremonial

⁹ *hi* is also the verb stem "to give," but if *hikū* were translated as "giver" — a feasible rendering — it should be possible to say *hikūhikū*. But this form does not exist.

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as well. The fixed relationships of mutual obligation are, as has been seen, between husband and wife, between parents and dependent children, between unmarried brother and sister, and between ceremonial friends. These relationships either do not apply to the aged, or, if they do, they may not be of great value to them. Generally speaking, the aged can depend upon those who are younger and vigorous only for the generalized sib benefits of sustenance and companionship. The deprivation of the aged is in what one might mistakenly call "the nonessentials." There is no one to buy an old lady a new petticoat or to get for an old man commercial tobacco. The aged do not protest such neglect because they acknowledge their lack of claim. Nonetheless, they feel their neglect and loss of status keenly enough. When I was among the *Bahúkiwa*, an aged lady employed all her senile charms to wheedle from me a new petticoat. Her husband, a very proud old man, deigned to accept only an occasional cigarette. From time to time he brought me fish and the old lady fetched me some of her small garden produce to reciprocate my favors.

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888 The old must look after themselves. The very old *Bahúkiwa* couple maintained a semblance of an independent household. The old woman, unable to carry a load of manioc, no longer gardened, but she fetched firewood and looked after children. She cooked for her husband. Her daughter-in-law provided her with manioc cake. The old man was still a good fisherman, contributing to the maloca. Besides, he was a consultant on many matters, particularly on trees to be used in manufactures.

[180] The locus of Cubeo culture is upon the vigorous household heads.
[769] The aged simply fall out of things. They are entitled to no particular respect, nor have they cause to be feared as spirits-to-be, for the Cubeo are interested only in their first ancestors and not in the spirits of the more recent dead.

DEATH

761 Death may be attributed by the Cubeo to natural causes such as
[759] accidents, violence, old age, but if it is the result of illness, it must be laid to some agency that has willed it. The most common agency is human. Whether the agency is human or supernatural the reaction to death is patterned on grief, anger, and fear. The Cubeo reaction to death is to give full rein to grief and anger and to short-circuit as quickly as possible the forebodings that what has happened to one may happen to all. The only deaths I heard about or witnessed were

THE DRINKING PARTY

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of social health of the sibs. They follow, in fact, a cycle of active entertaining leading eventually to drunken brawls and quarrels with allegations of sorcery and so to an era of bad feeling when only very close sibs entertain one another at parties where the drinkers are subdued and dismal. The cycle of euphoria-depression in the drinking parties reflects rather accurately the shifting state of social relations among sibmates and phratry mates.

The *unküdye* is to be distinguished from other ceremonial occasions that are accompanied by drinking, such as initiation rites, mourning, and naming a child. It is more of a secular affair. It may commemorate an event, such as completion of a house or the end of a pubescent girl's brief isolation period. In the main, it has its own justification and its own compulsion. The justification is to bring the sibs together so that they may drink, dance, sing, gossip, and narrate publicly their origin traditions. Since attendance is generally limited to sibs of the phratry, the *unküdye*, with all its erotic provocativeness, is hardly for courtship. It does stimulate and encourage adultery, however. The compulsion is to demonstrate economic capability. A sib should be able to provide all its phratry mates with more chicha than they can possibly consume. It should have a house large enough to encompass the entire phratry, and its young people should be vigorous enough to dance virtually without rest from late afternoon on one day until after dawn on the next. The rule of the *unküdye* is that it must go on until the last drop of chicha has been consumed. The pride of the hosts is that with all the guests' efforts to drink heartily they could just not make it. Thus, while the *unküdye* is a social binder, there is enough conflict in it to provoke serious resentment, quarrels, and temporary disruption of phratric unity.

The hosts of an *unküdye* have two very evident anxieties as they go about their preparations. One is that they will have enough chicha. This they can control, for they have planned their cultivations to allow for at least 15 per cent of total manioc production to go into chicha. And they work hard at preparing the brew; an entire community will work happily all through the night, reducing the manioc to a mash and masticating it all mouthful by mouthful to give fermentation a speedy start. What they cannot control is attendance.

The *unküdye* is also a test of a sib's standing within the phratry. If it is well esteemed it will attract many guests. When I stayed with the *Bahúkuiwa* they held a drinking party almost weekly, counting upon me as the novel attraction that would assure good attendance. As already mentioned they were then in an "up" phase, having moved to the main stream from the *caño*, and they basked for a time in an orgy

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El Diablo

catching the shining emerald, blue and yellow wings of giant butterflies. 122
 José, who had been carefully watching the passing bank, asked to borrow one of our shotguns. He soon returned with three *pava* – a type of large black-cock – which he had shot with four cartridges. Like all Indians, he was much more adept at hunting than ourselves.

The day wore on and the river widened, trees and creepers came right down to the water's edge, their leaves reflected peacefully by the calm surface. Sometimes the thick green foliage was covered in pale purple flowers, rather like lilac, whose sweet smell floated across the water as the boat moved through the beams of sunlight. It was warm and the scene had changed. We were no longer enclosed and we only once had to jump into the water to guide the loaded boat through a rapid.

Here Horacio, whose ankles had swollen to an alarming size, stumbled and fell in the rushing torrent. Perhaps this was an indication of our condition and the need to reach dry land. Sores had not healed and many had started to go septic. By contrast José and Uriel had gone from strength to strength, their bodies seeming to profit from the very hard work they had had to undergo.

Now the trees' shadows were lengthening across the river and three white egrets glided ahead of us. José's voice broke the silence: 'Only one more turn and we reach Kuarumey's *maloca*. His father was a famous chief who refused to allow any white man to enter the river – now he is dead.' As he said this we rounded the last bend.

There in front of us rising from the water's edge was a clearing of green manioc with an expanse of sky behind. We paddled the boat alongside the wooden canoes moored to the bank, while in the dusk we could barely distinguish the features of the Indians as they came down the path towards us. They carried no arms and seemed to be friendly. Soon they were helping us unload *El Diablo*. We debated whether we would stay the night by the river or in the *maloca*. The Indians however were in no two minds about this, and we found ourselves stumbling up the path in the darkness, following our laden hosts, very glad to feel the good dry earth beneath our bare feet and the warmth of the fires inside the great *maloca*. 123 •

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A Death

114 Matias arrived at the *maloca* the following day with the rest of the equipment we had left behind at the portage. Without his help we would have had to abandon it. That same night he started back on the return journey with his brother Bernavez, back to their *maloca* on the Río Ti. With them seemed to go our last contact with the outside world. Now was the time to collect our thoughts, to reorganize the equipment and to decide how we were going to carry out our work. The surroundings, the atmosphere, the Indians, everything was new. Each day, when evening arrived and we had eaten, we would sit across our hammocks and read by the light of a candle, or write up the day's events in our diaries. On Friday 6 January Brian wrote:

● 123 'Did not sleep very well last night, probably because I had taken a large mouthful of coca just before getting into my hammock. Nearly choked, the fine green powder making it virtually impossible to breathe; so had to run down to the river and wash my mouth free. The Tukano must have a special method for swallowing it.

512 The women got up very early, long before dawn, but I couldn't tell the time because my watch was lost on the way over the portage - too bad. They rubbed down manioc and the continuous noise made all further sleep impossible. Horacio left for the river before first light to develop a film he had taken with his old Rollei, also one of mine to see whether I'm giving the correct exposure in these dark conditions. He prepared the hypo last night and has to develop before the water temperature rises.

126 114 At dawn Kuarumey opened the door and the cold air rushed into the *maloca*. I went out to the jungle to relieve myself, armed as usual with a bottle to collect a humus sample. We do this nearly every morning - all these tiny bottles. I wonder whether the American drug company will ever discover a new Amazonian anti-biotic? Lovely pale pinks and delicate blues, the mist rising in great banks off the forest, and dew dripping from the trees. It was so peaceful and cool.

We joined Horacio for a late breakfast; all of us rather at sixes and sevens with each other as to what to do. The last days have taken a lot out of us and

A Death

at times we are very irritable. Donald, the most silent, is by far the most understanding, while Horacio and I with our opposite points of view tend to get across one another. 114

Spread out the two tarpaulins on the sand in front of the *maloca*, then all the equipment on top of them, once more throwing everything to the air and the sun. Donald and I doctored our sores. Both he and Horacio have the beginnings of boils on their arms; this could be dangerous. If our sores, go septic we really shall be in a mess - we had better take some penicillin. Donald dealt with the medical kit, Horacio checked over all the food supplies. With his blue and red pinstripe shirt, a Roman nose and scruffy growth, he looked just like an Arab street vendor squatting over his wares in the *souk*. We seem short of meat and Nescafé but otherwise all right. I took out all the cameras. Some of the lenses are in poor shape and neither the electronic flash nor my Japanese one is working. Spent ages trying to repair them and reached the conclusion that the filament on the electronic had broken - probably knocked as we came over the portage. Donald discovered a dud contact on the Jap flash and after much wastage of bulbs and various electric shocks got it to work.

The heat at midday is tremendous but a swim in the river refreshed me. José and Kuarumey had gone out with our two twelve-bores and returned at noon with three *pava*. Being stationary is a blessing; we can send the Indians off hunting - they love using our guns - and so supplement our rations. Have to be careful because Nestor should soon be arriving. 123 •

p.m. I slung my hammock between two trees - the sandflies never seemed to leave me alone - and wrote up my geological notes till the sun went down. Am putting all the specimens in sample bags, and it's lucky we have them, for some of the sandstones are crumbling to pieces. Horacio measured the rice into our bright-red tins - funny to think they were once green and with me in the snow and ice of Cocuy. Donald spent the whole afternoon drawing the *maloca* - beautiful, he should have been an architect. The children love watching him, and one little boy - I think he's Kuarumey's son - kept tugging his long beard, then racing over to feel mine, completely intrigued by our hairy faces. 114

Spent the evening editing birdsong tapes with Uriel who gave me long descriptions of each bird; we had seen very few of them. Surrounded by many overwhelmed listeners, and one boy started to imitate some of the songs amazingly. Ate rice and stewed bird and after silica-jelling the cameras (the plastic bags seem to puncture easily) climbed into my hammock. It's now late, a woman is still rubbing manioc somewhere in the darkness: they always seem so willing to help us, but Kuarumey, no ... he's sitting beneath 123 622

LEFT: Horacio López. CENTRE: Donald Tayler. RIGHT: Brian Moser.

Tukano

- 123 the *bréo* flame taking coca with two other men. He is silent and has offered
622 little real assistance; I wonder whether he resents our presence here.'

It did seem at times as though Kuarumey resented our presence, and he later had some cause for his suspicions – certainly in his own mind – when events took an unexpected turn. He was a striking man, tall and rather gaunt, with a proud almost arrogant manner. There was no doubt as to who was the head of the *maloca*, nor that we were visitors, fortunate to have his hospitality. We saw little of him during the daytime and it was some time before we learnt he was making a canoe some distance away in the forest.

501 Though the Tukano travel through the forest on hunting expeditions, canoes are used to go further afield, to fish or to trade with other groups. They are a river people as much as a forest people, and like many Amazonian tribes they have evolved their own methods of making canoes.

[171] The Noanamá, we found, dug out and shaped their canoes from solid wood, and it was necessary for them to find very large trees to do this. Many tribes of the southern Amazon use the bark of a tree, like the North American Indian, while some groups of the Guahibo and the Maku living in areas remote from the larger rivers do not use canoes at all. The Tukano, however, shape their canoes by a process of heat-warping.

[293] A tree – a hard type of cedar – had first been felled, then a twenty-foot section was cut and barked, and allowed to lie for several weeks, before Kuarumey started to cut the wood. Each day he went to the clearing, setting up a palm frond to shade himself when the midday sun broke into the clearing, through the gap in the trees overhead.

[412] Using his *azador*, a curved hoe-like blade, and a long stick with a sharp metal end, he first shaped the outside of the log, scraping off the bark. Then he made holes along its length and began to cut out the centre. It was hard work and he would often break off to make himself a cherooot, using the rolled leaf of a palm, while his eldest son continued the work. Once he disappeared in the jungle to set a monkey trap, a ring-snare high in a tree with fruit as the bait.

[224] He worked carefully, feeling the sides of the canoe so as not to make the shell too thin. After several days it was ready, braced with two small stumps to prevent the sides from closing. Then Kuarumey and several Indians from the *maloca* dragged the hull along the forest paths to the river bank nearly a mile away.

[412] Now the canoe was ready to be warped by burning. This could be undertaken only at certain times of the year when there was no risk of rain, for water on the hot wood might split it. Before they obtained iron and steel the Indians used to cut the trees with their stone axes. They would only partly shape the hull and burn out the centre with fire. Now, with the canoe already shaped, the burning was quicker and it would be completed within a day.

A Death

that José was the one man who could take us through to the mouth of the Piráparaná. 114

Throughout the whole journey the factor which played more on our minds than anything else was uncertainty. The way back over the dry channels was almost out of the question and the Indians would never have taken us; the way forward appeared to be a long succession of cataracts. Then there was the question of Nestor - would he ever arrive and how long should we wait? The longer we stayed the more insistent José became about leaving. He did not enjoy his role as an interpreter, he did not like asking his fellow-Indians questions and he seemed completely indifferent to the work we were trying to do. All this was understandable but it did not ease our position.

It was cold and wet when José and Uriel left early next morning to take a load of equipment ahead. Mist hung low over the forest and the trees dripped with moisture. 'This is white rain,' said Horacio. 'It is more usual in the winter months, so perhaps we are due for a wet spell and Nestor will get through after all.' We all had doubts in our minds and now, with José gone, we had no means of talking to the people in the *maloca*.

Suddenly Kuarumey's wife ran out and grabbed Brian's arm, beckoning him to follow her inside. From the far end of the dark interior, behind the palm screens, came strange sobs. The sounds rose and fell; across the bare earthen floor a slight figure bent over the embers of a dying fire. It was Watsora whose husband had been away on a hunting expedition for nearly a week. Her naked body, lit only by a dull red glow, was doubled up. She heaved and hardly seemed able to breathe. Only the day before she had carried her heavy basket of manioc from the plantation. Now her thin, drawn face, her sagging breasts, her dishevelled hair, aged her beyond belief. A young girl clutched her around the waist and moved to and fro with the heaving figure, quietly chanting to herself. Watsora's baby son ran to his mother's side and clasping her arm began to cry. 123 • 763

Kuarumey's wife implored us to help. She pointed to the black medicine chest. Only the previous night we had given the headman aspirin, but this illness seemed much more serious than a headache. We could not be sure what was wrong. Perhaps she had an internal haemorrhage, maybe it was consumption, or was it appendicitis? We couldn't know, none of us was a doctor. Horacio was firm: 'No, we must not give her any drugs, for if she dies, then what do you think will happen to us?' For a time we argued but eventually agreed. Horacio was right: no matter what we felt, we could not afford to be held responsible for her death, nor could we interfere.

A Tukano shooting fish with a long fish arrow.

[see p. 50-B]

Tukano

- 123 The wails increased, the young girl's chant grew louder as she repeated
763 the same notes over and over. The atmosphere in the *maloca* became unbearably tense and, while Horacio read outside, we went down to the river, trying to escape a situation which we could do nothing about. Our minds were not at rest and, when Horacio's drawn figure appeared walking slowly down the sandy track, we could guess what had happened.

'Watsora died five minutes ago,' he said and went back up the path. We said little and silently followed him back to the *maloca*. On the way we passed Kuarumey's old mother. Her normally jovial face was now serious. She avoided our eyes and continued to feed her toucan with beetle grubs. Inside all was silent, the wails had ceased, even the children were quiet and their innocent curiosity had turned to wariness. There was nothing we could do except wait and keep to ourselves. The boat was downstream and we had no means of talking to anyone. The tiny black sandflies converged on us in the stifling heat of the early afternoon. A woman came over to our equipment, undid a tin and took out a handful of rice, looked at the grains, smelt them and then carefully poured them back again, wiping her hands on a kitbag when she had finished.

- 123 Our anxiety increased. To read or write was impossible. We left the *maloca* to walk across the forest clearing. The question of giving or not giving drugs to the woman before she died had produced one dilemma. Now the question was - what next?

764 Returning later we noticed that the earth in the centre of the floor had been disturbed and fresh yellow clay lay on the surface. None of us had actually seen the corpse, but Donald had seen the young girl, who had been wailing at Watsora's side, take the dead woman's hammock down to the river and wash it. Later we learnt that the Tukano always bury their dead inside the *maloca*. The method is much like that of the Noanamá and the highland burials of the ancient Chibcha. They dig a trench and excavate a horizontal vault about three feet beneath the surface. The corpse, with the knees bound to the chest in the foetal position, is wrapped in his own hammock or in barkcloth and then inserted in the vault which is blocked with leaves, so that earth never touches the body. With the body are placed private possessions: pottery or a basket in the case of a woman; a bow and arrows, coca pouch or snuff-shell in the case of a man. They retain these possessions for the after-life, the happy hunting grounds where they will travel in spirit.

- 123 No ceremony could have taken place in so short a time, and the women continued to make cassava, as though nothing had happened. Before the death they were wailing, now they were silent. The people who had once been so ready to smile, the children who normally followed at our side, were aloof and distant. Each one of us was tense and worried and it was a relief when a new face came to the entrance of the *maloca*. He seemed familiar and we recognized one of the Indians we had first met on crossing into the head-

A Death

waters of the Piraparaná. He was returning home after leaving his baskets of *farinha* on the Río Ti and offered to take some of the equipment downstream in his empty canoe. The offer we accepted.

'There are *jakaratinga* in a small creek near my maloca,' he said in broken Spanish, 'and I want to borrow a shotgun and a torch to go and shoot one tonight.'

We had heard that this type of baby crocodile was good to eat, and this was another chance to restore the Indians' confidence in us. With a certain reluctance Donald lent his twelve-bore. Now only Horacio's .22 remained. We always had to rely on their help. If they looked on us as friends, they would not steal our guns. If they did not, they could kill us just as easily, whether they had our weapons or not.

That night the men squatted on their stools, around but not on the patch where the woman was buried. As they chewed coca, they mumbled at times in answer to Kuarumey. Several times one of his younger brothers left the group and came over to our hammocks to look inquisitively at our kitbags and finger them, his solemn face caught in the failing light of the torchwood. Horacio was more worried than either of us, for only a few years before he had been attacked by a group of Aucas in Ecuador and had escaped by swimming under his raft; the same tribe later killed five American Evangelical missionaries who, in attempting to establish friendly contact, had landed their plane near one of the Auca settlements. Horacio had always preferred to travel alone, paddling his canoe along deserted rivers and slinging his hammock close to the bank. To live under the same roof as the Indian made him feel ill at ease. Our anxiety was only increased by his recollections of a journey he had made in the Llanos the year before, on a tributary of the Orinoco:

'Moving downstream late one evening, I was paddling my small canoe, when I heard voices. Rounding a bend I saw a small group of Guahibos on the bank. Before I had even drawn level with them I heard the hiss of arrows. Suddenly I felt a searing pain as one passed through my left arm and pinned it to my side.' He showed us the great scar on his arm. 'I continued on down the river using my paddle as best as I was able, lying in the bottom of the canoe with the arrows thudding into the side.' How he had to extract the arrow from his arm and continue for days before he could get help was a grim story, all the more so in our own predicament.

It was still raining the next morning. Without any warning, Kuarumey stalked out of the *maloca* leaning on his staff, looking neither to left nor right. Some moments later two men followed him down to the river, their paddles on their shoulders and coca pouches slung across their backs. They were taking Kuarumey to the shaman who lived deep in the forest below the Piña *cachivera*. For the time being, all we could do was to wait. An old man sat humming to himself in front of the palm screen where Watsora died. Here

Tukano

- 123 was an opportunity to make a unique recording, but it was not the time to upset the Indians.

Donald wrote in his diary, 'José took Brian's gun with him when he left, now mine has gone too. As B. just said, "This is the sort of thing that could have happened twenty years ago - they take away your boat, then your guns, then murder you." It doesn't do to have too much imagination!'

All afternoon we waited in suspense, feeling trapped within the area of the *maloca* and the green manioc plantation surrounding it. Then, with dusk approaching, José and his brother walked up the path from the river. They carried nothing and José seemed ill at ease while Uriel remained silent. Over the evening meal we told them that we would leave early next morning and that our intention was to descend the Piraparaná, then the Apaporis, and eventually arrive at La Pedrera on the Caquetá. To return to Mitú was now out of the question. Up to now José had thought we were going to return to Mitú and he greeted the new plan with apparent enthusiasm. Still we could not be sure of his intentions. When they went back to *El Diablo* to collect the gun and their own belongings and did not return after an hour, doubts once more entered our minds. Horacio left for the river carrying his rifle and we followed, but our alarm was without foundation - we met our guides as they were coming back along the path.

That night we were able to relax a little for the first time in three days. At least our guides and the canoe had returned, though we began to think Nestor would never get through. In case he did we left detailed instructions in the *maloca*, together with a projected sketch of the Piraparaná and supplies to last him until he reached the proposed rendezvous. More important was the shaman's decision, but this we did not know, for by dawn next day we had left the *maloca* and Kuarumey had not returned.

A manioc plantation below a Tukano maloca.

3

Warpaint

Below Kuarumey's the river was wider and deeper – deep enough to use our diminutive 7-h.p. Johnson outboard motor. Frequently during a day's journey we would come to rapids or a fall where everything had to be removed from the boat and carried to a point where it would be possible to reload. Then, using ropes, slithering over the rocks, pulling, pushing and heaving, we would get the empty eight-hundred-pound shell over the rapid sections. Sometimes the canoe seemed on the point of being swept away to destruction, but José and Uriel, together with the Indians, who for the small reward of beads, a piece of cloth or nylon fishing line were always ready to join us, seemed to know exactly how to manage it, though much bigger than their own light and portable craft. 114

[123] •

Where the rapids were long and severe or there was a bend in the river, the Indians would sometimes have made a portage through the forest. On these occasions we would disappear for long periods, pushing and heaving *El Diablo* over the twisted roots and swampy ground through a jungle labyrinth, to reappear shouting and yelling to encourage ourselves at the lower end of the rapids, ready to load and continue on our way. During the severer overland passages the canoe might get a bad knock, and in spite of the recent overhaul it would be necessary to do more caulking. Sometimes, in despair, we doubted whether the old boat would even reach the Apaporis before she finally gave up and sank. To return the way we had come – which had been our original intention – was out of the question. Our only way out was to the Caquetá, a major tributary of the Amazon. What this journey would entail we could not imagine, for all the maps we possessed had often proved incredibly inaccurate. Of the time it would take us and the route we knew nothing. We had, however, heard that the lower reaches of the Apaporis were impossible to navigate owing to a series of great falls and rapids. This knowledge certainly gave us cause to worry during the ensuing weeks.

José by now had taken over responsibility for the motor. We took it in

LEFT: The front, painted with a design in charcoal and clay, and great eaves of a maloca. RIGHT: Cutting palm fronds to thatch the roof. [see p. 54-B] 000

Tucano

114 turns to take bearings and to time distances for our very rudimentary compass traverse. Often we came to fast sections of the river, where we would stop the engine, raise it off the back of the canoe - to which it was lashed by a piece of rope in case of an accident - pick up our paddles and guide the canoe through the swirling waters. It was as well we had the Indians with us on these occasions, for we never knew what lay ahead, and the water swirled by faster and faster. The following was a daily occurrence: 'El Diablo' was filling with water rushing in over her stern. We hung desperately on to extremely slippery rocks, then suddenly got lost in the froth with the boat going safely ahead. The boys take it all in their stride and utter high-pitched yells as they miraculously guide us through the more dangerous parts with their paddles.' Horacio was in his element at such times; all his travels by canoe in the higher tributaries of the Orinoco had been done with a paddle as his only means of propulsion. An engine was anathema to him, something totally unreliable, which invariably broke down at the worst possible moments and wasted days in repairs - if repairs were possible - whereas a paddle provided unfailing if slow progress.

At this stage we not only had to travel down the river but also to return up it, as we still had too much equipment to take at once. Normally José and the Indians would travel downstream for several hours with the equipment, then return for us. It was on one such journey of José's that the outboard started misbehaving. It was too late to do anything when the engine finally stopped and refused to restart. The following morning we found to our dismay that it had seized up. We stripped it down and after completely dismantling it found that the gearbox oil had leaked away and the whole shaft had locked solid. Fortunately we had enough gearbox oil in reserve - later we learnt that bananas make an excellent substitute - and we thought all was well again until, as the gearcase was being replaced, the clutch sleeve snapped. This rendered the engine useless. So that day we continued paddling down river in a very despondent mood - the thought of paddling our way to the Caquetá was not a happy one. The best we could do was to make for the next *maloca* and if possible effect a repair.

We arrived at the *maloca* that afternoon. Not a single Indian was within sight, not even a dog. At first we assumed the house had been abandoned, but a smell of wood smoke lingered. Puzzled, we noticed the fires had only recently been left. This was the first time we had encountered such a breach of hospitality, for the Indians must have known of our approach. We assumed however, they would return at nightfall, so we set about hanging our hammocks and preparing our beans and rice.

[123] The Indians did not return that night or the next, and the deserted *maloca* seemed strange and forbidding. Horacio was certain that these were unfriendly Indians and that this was their way of showing it. We should therefore be cautious and move on as soon as possible. But the broken

Warpaint

engine enforced a stay. We tried wood, then Perspex to replace the broken sleeve, and it was several days before we found that a section from one of our aluminium eating plates was the answer. 114

One day, while we were waiting in the deserted *maloca*, we were suddenly surprised by shouts. Outside a fierce-looking Indian with a carved redwood club in his right hand stamped and grunted his way round the bare sandy ground in front of the *maloca*. He was followed by three younger men, each carrying a machete, all with their faces covered in red warpaint. Mario Capitan, who had been made a 'chief' by the *caucheros* wore a long white feather in his ear-plug; he seemed annoyed. Probably he had come out of curiosity or to demonstrate his authority, or he may have heard of Watsora's death. His father had had great influence over the lower Piraparaná, murdering all whites who entered. Mario, we reflected, could well do the same. Then suddenly and silently he and his small band of warriors departed to the river, to their canoes, back to their own forest home. 123 •

It was with some relief that we set off again from the deserted *maloca* to continue downstream. At night we would clear an area near the bank for a camp site, put up the tarpaulin for the equipment, then sling our hammocks to the nearest trees. If it started raining we would have to huddle under the tarpaulin till dawn. It was much pleasanter when a *maloca* was close by at the end of a day's journey, as there we were assured of warmth and a roof over our heads. 114

During the course of our journey we visited fifteen *malocas*; in some we only stayed overnight, in others several days. They extended a distance of about 250 river miles - from Kuarumey's to the last rapids on the Piraparaná, about 100 miles from its mouth.

Though at times we were angry with José for always hustling us on with threats of desertion if we did not continue downstream, it was for the most part only through him that we could talk to the Tukano: only those who had worked rubber knew any Spanish. It was during these visits that we became better acquainted with the Indians, though they remained remote, perhaps because they distrusted us, true 'Sons of the Forest', their personalities hidden as deep within themselves as they were deep in Amazonia.

The Forest Addicts

as though the visitor to a *maloca* is explaining his reasons for arrival while the host answers him in short phrases of affirmation. They do not look at each other during the greeting, no matter whether they are in a *maloca*, on the river or in the forest. We were continually impressed by their simple yet perfect manners. Cassava and perhaps a newly-caught fish would be brought to us when we first arrived at a *maloca*, then, without our asking, we would be shown where we could sling our hammocks. 576

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The men have an easier life than the women. Their short, clipped speech has, like their gait, a matter-of-fact sense of urgency about it, but is punctuated by high trills of laughter when they joke and make fun amongst themselves. They are born with a sense of humour, and it is the old who suffer at the hands of the young. In one *maloca* a little boy consistently refused to let his grandfather take his afternoon siesta. To everyone's great amusement he would tickle the old man with a piece of grass, pretending a fly was settling on his body. 562
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It would be impossible to say whether the early push of the Jesuits up the River Amazon towards the end of the seventeenth century, and the more recent incursions of the *caucheros* and the Roman Catholic missionaries on the Vaupés and Caquetá, have had an influence on Tukano thought. Certainly their beliefs are very complex. Moreover, the Tukano live in an area as far from the Amazon as the Hebrides from London, while the first direct missionary contact with the Upper Piraparaná had been made by Padre Elorza only the month before we arrived. 797

Besides believing in some vague all-powerful good spirit or god, the Indian believes in many lesser spirits, both good and evil, all of which have a great influence on him and to a large extent rule his life. The good spirits can be recognized in the pleasant things of the forest. They are represented by fruit trees and plants – bananas, pineapples and other edible fruits, and coca too; the various trees used in making the *malocas*; the cool and clear forest streams. Whereas the poison in manioc, the twisted creepers and roots which trip weary hunters, and the jagged rocks in rapids which split canoes – these are evil spirits. 776

Apart from this animistic belief, the Indian believes in an immortal soul – at least in some cases, for he acknowledges the existence of spirits of the dead, usually his ancestors. The spirit of a living man wanders only when he is asleep. The shaman on the contrary can divest his body of the spirit at will and glide through the jungle in the guise of a puma. 775
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Indian life is greatly influenced by this fourfold world of the spirit – the monotheistic spirit or god, the animistic spirits, the ancestor spirits and the detached living spirits, and it is the evil ones who hold the greatest sway over a man's life. 776
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Usually the men are called after birds, and the women after plants and 000

Tukano

551 nowers, but when asking a Tukano his name we would be given a Spanish one or nothing at all. Possibly the reason for this was that by saying his name aloud an Indian might call back the spirit of an ancestor who had the same name, or worse, by telling us he might have given us power to work evil over him. Incidentally they would usually ask ours, which we would give them - to their obvious amusement, possibly owing to the strange sound which they would find almost unpronounceable.

152 An Indian will show a stoical indifference to a wound in fighting or an
752 accident while hunting. On one occasion a man was brought to us with his hand full of gunshot. He had been carrying his old carbine through the

• [123] forest by the muzzle! We spent nearly two hours cleaning the wound and picking out the shot, while he chatted away to his brother seemingly unconcerned. Yet when suffering from a less obvious ailment an Indian is often convinced that someone has worked evil on him. Should death occur, his relations must seek revenge on whoever is responsible. On the occasion of [123] Watsora's death our own position was extremely unsure, particularly when Kuarumey departed on the following morning to visit the shaman.

756 It seems in retrospect extraordinary that we were ever allowed to con-
123 tinue our journey. For the shaman once consulted has to find a victim on whom he can place the blame for an ailment or death - in this case both, in the same house, the one in which we were guests. What better subject could he have had, the visiting white man, regarded with suspicion by the Indians, and uninvited? Barely two decades earlier the Indians of the Piraparaná showed no compunction in killing *caucheros* who interfered in their lives. Surely their views could not have changed so radically, in so short a time, to make ourselves an exception to the rule.

764 Perhaps the most noticeable thing about Watsora's burial was the speed with which she was buried and the fact that this was done within the *maloca*.
[775] This could be accounted for by the fear that the body might be whisked away and eaten - some of these tribes were once cannibals - and then the spirit could never escape to the afterlife. Also, once buried, there was no indication as to where they had placed the body.

614 Like most of the Amazonian tribes the Tukano have no real central authority or clan cohesion. The authority, such as it is, is invested in the heads of families. These composite families seldom number more than twenty to thirty people, usually far less. In the past clans have united to fight a common enemy. At the turn of the century one chieftain south of the Apaporis organized a small army of clans to fight the encroaching white *caucheros* and to kill any Indians found collaborating with them, but this was an exceptional case.

[756] Even the head of the clan or family has only a semblance of authority, though there are exceptions, and often less power than the shaman. This lack of leadership combined with a preference for isolation - which may be

Tukano

278 learnt many weeks later from a *cauchero* that there were specialists in this art. The Maku, he told us, are the expert curare makers in this area. They boil the scrapings of a liana together with two herbs, then strain the liquid through leaves and boil it again until it forms a black glutinous mass. This they place in small pots and trade it with other tribes, often for food and shelter; for the Maku are nomads. Though strychnine is always the base, various ingredients are occasionally added, from ants to putrefied animal remains. The most deadly poison, which was once reserved for human beings, is said to paralyse the victim in a matter of seconds.

224 The monkey is the most common of all the animals hunted for the pot.
252 These are hung over a fire and smoked for days. The first time we were
[123] offered monkey, we were given the head, which we thought we were supposed to admire. But the brain, we learnt, is the greatest delicacy, like the head and eyes of a fish. The monkey often grips a branch as it dies, and for this reason the Indians would shoot many more than they ever managed to retrieve.

224 We never ventured to go with the Indians when they went hunting, as we
123 would have made more noise than them and frightened the game. Moreover, we felt we could never keep up. One morning the children came to a *maloca* we were staying in to say that a *capybara* had strayed along the river bank close to where they had been bathing. Immediately an Indian picked up his bow and arrow and quickly made for the river. It was unusual for an animal to stray so close to the house and we followed at a distance hoping that we might see the hunt.

Half-crouched, with his bow and curare-tipped arrows gripped in his hand, he began to stalk the large water rat. Getting as close as he dared, he put the small beeswax quiver head down on the ground, with the arrow shafts upright. He placed one arrow in the bow. Twisting one leg around the shafts, his toes braced against the base of the quiver, he drew back the bow waiting for the *capybara* to move into the open, ready to take a second arrow from the sheath should the first miss. He held the bow fully stretched, crouched lower, hesitated for an instant, then released the arrow. The rodent
[252] rolled over without a sound. No second arrow was needed. That night we boiled the *capybara* which tasted like pork. The poison never taints the meat; it only affects the nervous system through the bloodstream.

224 The tapir is the largest of the forest mammals hunted by the Indian. It is the size of a cow, with a long snout, small eyes and slotted feet, and its only defence is camouflage. Speckled brown and black like the sun-dappled forest floor, when young, and turning to a dull slate-brown when fully grown, they gather at their watering places to drink. They were hunted relentlessly by the

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Panpipes and Don Giovanni

In early February we started to make a small collection. For exchange we had brought rolls of coloured cloth, cigarettes, combs, thread and beads, fishing line and hooks. When we arrived at a *maloca* we would give presents to the headman and his wife, then to the rest of his family. There was never any hesitation in allowing us to sling our hammocks in their houses, but our giving gifts perhaps assured them of our friendly intentions. Moreover, in return they would often give us *farinha* which would help out with our own food. Of all the trade goods, small beads, and cloth especially in primary colours, red, blue and yellow, were the most popular. They preferred white beads and were prepared to exchange many of their own possessions for them. But even if we had lived with the Indians for some time, so that they knew us, they would have been loath to part with certain things. In order to obtain one of their magnificent head-dresses, which may have taken a man months to complete because of the scarcity of the feathers, we had to give them one of our shotguns, nothing less. A shotgun was as good as a bow and arrow. For the Indian it had the advantage that you could shoot more than one bird at a time and it had a greater range than an arrow. But for years their gun would probably be useless because of a lack of shot and powder. Also the gun made a great noise and this frightened the game away. The only three we saw were ancient hammer guns, probably taken from *caucheros* they had killed.

In one of the last *malocas* of the Piraparaná we obtained a canoe. This proved extremely useful as it could be loaded with some of the lighter equipment, such as the collection, and towed from the back of *El Diablo*. Unfortunately it was narrow and unstable and on one occasion as we passed through some turbulent water, it swung sideways in an eddy and overturned. Before we were able to do anything several pieces of our small collection had already disappeared. As a result of this we learnt to keep an Indian in the stern of the canoe to guide it.

The rivers of the Amazon are usually termed black or white, to differentiate between clear and muddy water. Because of the amount of suspended sediment, white rivers are said to have many more fish. There were however a variety of fish in the 'black' Piraparaná. When we travelled on the river we would often see large gate-traps at the mouths of the smaller creeks. The

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Panpipes and Don Giovanni

can produce a most haunting tune. This tiny flute, the three-holed *sihoo*, is more often played outdoors than inside the house. Its clear rippling notes mingle with the forest calls, perhaps imitating a bird drawn closer and closer to the Indian hunter. The deer-bone flute, in contrast, has a harsh, piercing, eerie sound. It is made from a deer's tibia and three holes are drilled into the bone with a *capybara's* tooth. A little slit is cut into the head of the deer-bone, down which the man blows. Small lumps of beeswax are melted into the apexes and shrill notes come flowing out - bizarre perhaps, but melodious. This instrument is generally heard during the *chicha* ceremonies between the dances. The tortoise shell, too, is an instrument which has a weird, almost hypnotic tone. It is played by a man who squats on the ground with the shell gripped under the knee between thigh and calf muscles. Rapidly he rubs, almost jerks, the palm of his hand over the beeswax-coated head of the shell. Sometimes two men will play two tortoise shells and a pair of panpipes at the same time, and the continuous reverberation of the *goos*, as the tortoise shells are known, together with the syncopation of the panpipes produces an amazing effect. The high muffled tones of the *goos* echo round the *maloca*, driving the Indian's coca-bemused senses into a semi-hypnotic trance. To us this was not an unpleasant sensation and on listening closer we could pick out what was in fact a highly sophisticated rhythm. Each panpipe entered just off beat in an exciting, almost modernistic manner, more reminiscent of a modern jazz quartet than four primeval instruments of the Amazon.

Our recording equipment intrigued the Indians - those small boxes with wheels which turned, lengths of 'string' with weird metal objects on the end, held close to their faces or hung from the ridge poles of their *malocas*. It was all beyond their comprehension. At first they were frightened but once they had listened to their own voices and music, they were astounded and could not wait to hear more. We all too soon found ourselves using as much of our precious battery power to play back as we did to record. Sometimes they were intrigued by Western music - Beethoven piano concertos, Brahms and Gershwin had little effect, but the Bach double violin concerto drew many eager faces, a Haydn trumpet concerto brought smiles of approval and on hearing the Commendatore's deep voice in the last act of *Don Giovanni* the whole *maloca* drew near in wonder. Perhaps this really was the white man's shaman.

We waited four days at Bréo's while the women brought in baskets and baskets of manioc to prepare for *chicha*, and the men pounded coca leaves incessantly. During this time the *maloca* filled with families who had travelled by canoe from their distant forest homes along the winding river courses. Some had already been warned by messengers of the coming festival to celebrate the manioc harvest, but on the afternoon before it started Bréo left for a high knoll of ground, and stood blowing a clay horn - perhaps to warn

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Colombian Kaleidoscope

hensive study of these designs all over South America. Certain trends might be found, early migrations might be illustrated by particular styles. The study might also tell us something of the character of these people. It could show the course of their migrations and possibly even date them, though, unlike the cave art of Europe, it is impossible to date individual drawings. But if the diversity of the trends of art in the small area we visited is any indication, a survey of the whole would seem an almost superhuman task.

Among the highlanders artistic expression had less of the foresters' spontaneity. Their art had a particular purpose. The coloured stripes and markings on their cotton mantles showed the lineage or family of the wearer. The Kogi, we were told, had gold ornaments, face-masks and even feather head-dresses in their temples. But they were kept hidden as objects of religious ceremonial. The Motilon found expression in the bindings of their arrow-heads, but these, again, were probably once tribal marks used for identification.

The foresters seemed to decorate everything: the patterned basket-weaves of the Noanamá, their bead caps and gourd designs; the musical instruments, the clay or charcoal designs on the front of a Tukano *maloca*, and their gay festival paraphernalia. Here there was a more natural outflow of creativeness, which had become inhibited among the highlanders. There were a few signs of outside influence, yet it was essentially traditional art. The head-dress we brought back to the British Museum was compared with one obtained on the Caquetá by the botanist Richard Spruce over a hundred years ago. It is impossible to tell the difference. Here as in all Indian art is evidence of the supernatural, the power of an unfathomed spirit world. There is none of the triumph of mind over matter, none of the intellectualism we find in European art with the evolution of classicism and the baroque. In this sense even the work of the Maya or the Aztec was still primitive.

The forest dweller's art has the spontaneity of a child, yet his approach is both sophisticated and intelligent. He will weave a pattern for a basket because the idea appeals to him and shape a paddle with the finish of a craftsman and the design of an artist.

The Indian is something of a connoisseur. This is the result of a natural critical sense. The Tukano would never accept cloth, fish-hooks or beads from us without a thorough previous inspection. The colour of the cloth is of prime importance, its strength would be tested, as would be that of the fish-hooks and nylon line, and the test for a good bead was to place it between the teeth - to see if it cracked! Pottery or baskets we had obtained by barter

LEFT: A Motilon playing an axe-head flute. RIGHT: A child at his mother's breast; in front of them is ground maize. [SEE p. 122 B]

Epilogue

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would be carefully inspected by Indians we met later, who would disregard them if they considered them inferior work.

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Sometimes we would play music we had recorded in the Amazon to see what the highlanders' reaction was. Then we would play classical music or jazz. Usually a simple tune or one with a distinct rhythm conveyed something to them. There was some interest in Bach or Mozart, but none in Brahms. As for their own music, once we had shown our interest or they had heard the play-back on the recording machine, they all - with the exception of the Kogi - would play to us for hours, and the range of sounds and instruments was astonishing.

Astonishing, too, was the realization that an Indian besides being a cultivator, a hunter, a fisherman, a boat-maker and house-builder, besides knowing the tribal legends and myths and the arts of basket weaving, wood carving and design, was also a musician, not only playing but himself making, with considerable skill, a wide range of musical instruments.

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Among the Tukano alone we counted fifteen such instruments. A jingle-rattle is admittedly not very difficult to play, but it requires skill to make one and to design it so that each shell produces a certain note. A panpipe or a deer-bone flute may not be difficult to make, but it takes practice and determination to play one.

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The Indian is deeply involved in the natural world about him, and just as he incises on a calabash the representation of a beetle or a frog, he will try to imitate the calls of birds or the sounds of the forest. All his instruments reflect this forest environment: snail and tortoise shells, deer-bones, nutshells and gourds. But his music is also deeply involved with myth and ritual. We found the giant *jurupari* flutes were never placed where women could see them. They were used during the ceremony to call their god. When the women heard the flutes, booming like alpine horns in the distance, they fled into the forest, not daring to return till the flutes had been returned to the stream bed. The sacred significance of many of the instruments may account for their elaborate designs.

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Very little is known of the origin of Indian, as of all music. Perhaps it first evolved during religious ceremonies, through the waving of a stick in the air or its being beaten on the floor; or perhaps through the rustle of marsh reeds held in the hand and shaken as Severiano did during the ceremony of *Canta Hai*. This may have been the first sound to suggest the use of nutshells and seed-rattles.

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When we were living with the Casacará-Motilon Alos Clark told us that the Indians put the mark of a stag's antlers on their foreheads to bring them luck. He also gave us his interpretations of the legend of the puma and the deer, from whom the clan was descended. In the Amazon the shaman is said to be able to disappear at will and travel through the forest in the guise of a puma, because this animal was the most dreaded of all. Both these animals